INTRODUCTION: A CIVIC NATION AT RISK

From Eastport Maine, to Tuscson, Arizona, the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange works with local arts organizations and community residents to produce evening-length dance performances to celebrate community resiliency in the face of difficult times. Besides dance, the "Hallelujah" projects involve singing, storytelling, and local conversations about the importance of working together for the good of all.

In an Ann Arbor, Michigan, neighborhood, four young couples decide to get together every Tuesday night for dinner and conversation, rotating the cooking and cleaning responsibilities. A few months after its inception, this supper club evolves into the neighborhood's unofficial organizing committee, sponsoring block parties, movie outings and other social affairs.

In Washington, D.C., a non-profit organization is assembling a group of 125 emerging leaders under 40 years old who have begun making a difference in the Capital city. These leaders' contributions, in areas from public education to crime reduction, have not yet been fully recognized by local foundations, media, or leadership programs. But under the auspices of an 18-month leadership program sponsored by the nonprofit Local Initiative Support Training and Education Network (LISTEN), these young social entrepreneurs will form friendships and partnerships with one another and, it is hoped, evolve into Washington's next generation of civic stewards.

In state capitals across the country, a non-profit job-training and civic-education group known as YouthBuild holds "advocacy days" for young disadvantaged adults. These young people meet with state and federal legislators to discuss problems affecting the young people and their communities. One advocacy day participant, leaving a U.S. Senator's office, summarized his first meaningful experience with civic participation: "To think I wasted years dealing drugs when I could have been doing this – telling legislators what matters to me!"

Oklahoma MetaFund, a virtual community development corporation serves as a connector and broker, linking civic leaders in counties statewide with bankers who will provide start-up capital for economic development projects, including micro-businesses in the civic leaders' communities. The founders created the fund in the recognition that, in forging a prosperous community, *whom* you know – your social network - matters more than *what* you know.

In Kentucky, an educational advocacy group called the Prichard Committee trains parents across the state to be civic leaders in their children's schools. The parents learn how to run meetings, analyze information, prepare agendas, and, most importantly, recruit other parents to get involved.

These examples represent America at its best: a nation of helpers, joiners, and good citizens bent on building community in a big, diverse, modern nation. Notwithstanding its reputation as a land of rugged individualists and cutthroat capitalists, America throughout its history has been exceptionally civic-minded by any standard. We are a nation rich in "social capital," which we define as "social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them."[1] Americans have a remarkable proclivity to reach out to one another, to lend a hand to others in need, and to organize groups to advance the commonwealth. This ability has earned the respect and admiration of international observers at least since Alexis de Tocqueville's famous insight in the 1830s that "Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions constantly form associations." [2]

Americans

Tuning in

But not

Turning out

Why worry

About vanishing dinner parties,

Bowling leagues,

Or voters?

Joining a group

Boosts your life expectancy

As much as quitting smoking

[1] We have adopted the political scientist Robert Putnam's definition. See Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), p. 19.

[2] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Vol. 2, Book 2, Chapter V (New York: Borzoi Books of Alfred A. Knopf, 1976).

A Civic Fabric Badly Frayed

And yet, at the dawn of the 21st century, America faces a civic crisis. Once-commonplace activities such as the dinner parties and community arts performances described above are slowly vanishing from the American landscape. Increasingly, Americans are withdrawing from communal life, choosing to live alone and play alone. No longer participants, we are becoming mere observers of our collective destiny. Most Americans see no obvious connection between dinner parties and the health of American society and democracy. More worrisome is the fact that many Americans fail to see the connection between political participation and the nation's well being. However, without strong habits of social and political participation, the world's longest and most successful experiment in democracy is at risk of losing the very norms, networks, and institutions of civic life that have made us the most emulated and respected nation in history. The reversal of this downward spiral is critical to the civic and social health of our nation.

every 10 minutes of commuting time
cuts all forms of civic engagement
by 10%

Why Social Capital Matters

Research has begun to show how powerfully social capital, or its absence, affects the well being of individuals, organizations, and nations. Economics studies demonstrate that social capital makes workers more productive, firms more competitive, and nations more prosperous. Psychological research indicates that abundant social capital makes individuals less prone to depression and more inclined to help others. Epidemiological reports show that social capital decreases the rate of suicide, colds, heart attacks, strokes, and cancer, and improves individuals' ability to fight or recover from illnesses once they have struck. Sociology experiments suggest that social capital reduces crime, juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancy, child abuse, welfare dependency, and drug abuse, and increases student test scores and graduation rates. From political science, we know that extensive social capital makes government agencies more responsive, efficient, and innovative. And from our own personal experience we know that social capital makes navigating life a whole lot easier: our friends and family members cheer us up when we're down, bring us chicken soup when we're sick, offer job leads when we're unemployed, baby-sit our kids when we're away away, join us at the movies when we're bored, give us loans when we're broke, and remember our birthdays when even we forget them.

It is becoming increasingly clear that social capital has an enormous array of practical benefits to individuals and to communities. What is more, social capital has what economists call "positive externalities." That is, networks of trust and reciprocity not only benefit those within them, but also those outside them. Consequently, when social capital is depleted, people suffer in clear and measurable ways, and there is a ripple effect beyond a scattering of lonely individuals. Shoring up our stocks of social capital, therefore, represents one of the most promising approaches for remedying all sorts of social ills.

Yet the national stockpile of social capital has been seriously depleted over the past 30 years. By virtually every measure, today's Americans are more disconnected from one another and from the institutions of civic life than at any time since statistics have been kept. Whether as family members, neighbors, friends, or citizens, we are tuning out rather than turning out.

The Erosion of Social Capital in America

The most familiar example of civic decline is Americans' growing refusal to go to the polls. Casting a ballot in national elections has dropped by roughly 25% since the mid-1960s. There has been an even bigger decline – between 30% and 40% – in how many Americans work for a political party, serve as an officer of a club or organization, serve on an organizational committee, attend a school or community meeting, or attend a political event.[3] Even purely pleasurable get-togethers are becoming increasingly scarce. For example, the number of times per year that Americans entertain friends at home has dropped by 45% since the mid-1970s, and the fraction of Americans who go to others' homes to socialize has plunged nearly that much since the early 1980s.[4] Once-familiar social activities – picnicking, playing cards with friends, even hanging out at the neighborhood bar – are fast becoming relics of a bygone era. Families, too, are spending less time together than they used to. Parents and their children are about one-third less likely to take vacations together, watch television together, or even chat with one another.[5] In a recent YMCA survey, American adolescents said "not having enough time together" with parents ranked as their top concern. More than four in ten parents said they didn't have enough time to spend with their kids – mainly because of work obligations.[6]

Our feelings about one another and about our communal obligations have also changed in distressing ways over the past generation. Only about a third of Americans think most other people can be trusted, down from more than half of Americans who were trusting in 1960. There has been an equally steep decline since the early 1950s in the belief that Americans are as honest and moral as they used to be. These trends are troubling for two important reasons. First, our perception of others affects our willingness to work and socialize together. Second, and worse, our perceptions may reflect an actual decline in trustworthiness. Perhaps it is no surprise that we are fast building two kinds of walled societies: gated communities and prisons.

Americans have become less public-spirited in less visible ways, as well. Even as the number of charitable organizations has exploded, the fraction of our national income contributed to them has shrunk. We are more likely to ignore traffic signals and to gesticulate rudely at fellow drivers. Americans overwhelmingly believe that our culture has become coarse and uncivil.

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[3] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 45.
[4] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 99.
[5] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 101.
[6] "Talking With Teens: The YMCA Parent and Teen Survey Final Report," May 2000, at http://www.ymca.net

What Caused our Civic Decline?

Why has our civic infrastructure collapsed, bringing our civility down with it? A massive analysis by political scientist Robert Putnam demonstrates that the single most important cause of the decline in social capital is an irreversible demographic shift. Namely, an exceptionally civic generation of older Americans is slowing down and dying, and far less civic-minded generations of Baby Boomers and Baby Busters are taking their place.[7] Other profound and durable social changes have only magnified the generational impact. Entertainment television, a veritable death ray for civic life, has become our primary source of information and relaxation, crowding out more sociable leisure-time activities. Women have poured into the formal labor force, opening new doors for them but also sapping the neighborhood and voluntary organizations that used to flourish under unpaid female leadership. In a consumption-mad, booming economy, working professionals with civic leadership skills face increasing pressure to work long hours and weekends, forcing them to skip school meetings and family dinners. And the proliferation of suburbs and exurbs, with their car-focused culture and absence of community spaces, has distanced neighbor from neighbor, all but eliminating the sorts of casual interactions on which yesterday's small towns and urban neighborhoods thrived. This steep decline in social capital, not surprisingly, has affected all of us: Black, White, Native American, Latino, Asian American; male and female; young and middle-aged; city dwellers, suburbanites, and rural residents; professionals and blue-collar employees.

A Call to Connect

At the dawn of her 225th year, the United States embodies a multitude of contradictions. Americans are both fabulously rich and desperately poor; religiously ebullient yet spiritually empty; civically aging yet demographically young. The decline in social capital is related in complex ways to these trends, and the need to rebuild social capital becomes ever more important in light of them.

America's civic culture cannot be restored without deliberate effort. We need nothing less than a sustained, broad-based social movement to restore civic virtue and civic participation in America. Fortunately, now is a time of unprecedented opportunity for nurturing community. After a decade of economic growth, and the elimination of the staggering federal deficit, we can confidently turn some of our newfound prosperity to civic, not just material, ends. The social problems that once seemed intractable – an epidemic of gun violence in the biggest cities, soaring rates of teenage pregnancy, smoking and drug abuse – have begun to recede. Technological innovation is occurring at lightning speed, bringing with it new means to connect citizens and to foster civic participation.

Even though massive changes in citizens' attitudes and behavior will be necessary, starting that process may be far less daunting than the magnitude of the crisis might suggest. As with financial capital, modest investments in social capital generate impressive long-run returns. Social capital is self-reinforcing. Just as a small amount of money becomes a fortune as interest compounds

[7] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, section III.

over time, a small investment in social capital creates a "virtuous circle" in which good deeds beget good deeds.

America is famous for facing our problems and going about solving them. Countless individuals and institutions already are toiling in varying degrees of obscurity to revive communities and to reconnect individuals. We salute these leaders – whether they be the 18-to-32-year-old Generation X "social entrepreneurs," who have created a national network of community-service corps; or older Americans, who have brought the national rate of volunteering to its highest level in recent memory; or pastors, who are spearheading massive community-building projects in central cities. America needs to honor and learn from these efforts, and to carry them out on a much broader scale.

If we are to solve our civic crisis, we will need a wholesale change in the institutions that structure our private, professional, social, and public lives. Many of our institutions lack vibrancy and have failed to accommodate changes in the way we live our lives. We need to replace outdated institutions with new, more relevant institutions and to help existing institutions retool for the 21st century. For example, employers and labor laws still assume that Daddy works while Mommy stays home to tend to domestic matters, even though very few families (about 20%) fit this description anymore. Similarly, the political establishment assumes that voters want to be polled and pandered to, even when there is ample evidence that they instead want visionary, courageous leaders who see politics as a truly deliberative and participatory process. To make broad citizen engagement easier and more rewarding, it is up to us, as individuals, to change the organizations with which we are affiliated. Federal, state, and local governments, employers, universities, museums, human-services agencies, youth groups, schools, houses of worship, and even families will have to try new approaches.

To be sure, the magnitude of necessary change will vary enormously both across and within categories of institutions. Some institutions – youth groups and houses of worship, for example – already consider the creation of social capital as central to their mission. But even among institutions for which social capital building is at most a secondary goal – government agencies, workplaces, schools, and families, for example – we can see remarkable efforts to nurture trust, connectedness, and civic engagement. Building on these farsighted efforts, we must increase the supply of opportunities for civic engagement, as well as the demand. We need not only *more* civic engagement, but also *better* civic engagement. Every institution must make building social capital a principal goal or core value.

Principles for Building Social Capital

Throughout this report, we offer principles of social capital building to guide institutional leaders. Some of these principles are specially tailored to specific types of institutions, and they are discussed in the next five chapters. Here we suggest four principles that are broadly applicable across categories of organizations: the *Social Capital Impact Principle*; the *Recycling Principle*; the *Bridging Principle*; and the *C2C Principle*.

The Social Capital Impact Principle. The frame of "social capital" helps us to see the world afresh. Social capital is not only a resource, but it is also a lens for evaluating institutions, programs, and individual behavior. Looking through a social capital lens, for example, we see front porches not as an architectural frill, but as an effective strategy for building strong, safe, friendly neighborhoods. Consistent use of the social capital lens can both prevent civically harmful decisions and guide us toward civically beneficial choices. Much in the way America is developing "diversity" as a lens for judging the performance of employers in recruiting and retaining workers, and "environmental impact" is factored in judging the wisdom of economic development projects, we will become a better place when the "social capital impact" becomes a standard part of institutional and individual decision-making.

The Recycling Principle. Unlike financial capital, social capital has an interesting and valuable property: It is not expended when it is drawn upon. Instead, drawing upon our stocks of social capital usually generates even more. Therefore, as individuals and institutional decision-makers, we must imagine innovative ways to "recycle" existing stocks of social capital to create new stocks of different forms. For example, the political movement for women's suffrage emerged, in part, from non-political literary circles.

The Bridging Principle. Social capital may be categorized in many ways. One important way is the degree to which the connections reinforce similarities among individuals, or span differences. Alliances between people who are more alike than they are different are called "*bonding*" social capital. Connections between people who are different along some important dimension – such as race, socioeconomic status, or gender – are referred to as "*bridging*" social capital. Although both bonding and bridging networks are valuable, we believe that Americans should put a special emphasis on creating "bridging" social capital. Research shows that building connections across groups is especially valuable for everything from getting a job to securing important social and political rights.[8] For example, a recent study concluded that decent wages and working conditions for immigrant farmworkers were secured only after organizers brought together an ethnically, religiously, and socio-economically diverse group of people to work on the issue.[9]

[8] On the importance of bridging social capital for job attainment, see Mark S. Granovetter, *Getting a Job* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974); Mary Corcoran, Linda Datcher, and Greg Duncan, "Most Workers Find Jobs through Word of Mouth" *Monthly Labor Review* (August 1980), 33-35; and James H. Johnson Jr., Elisa Jayne Bienenstock, and Walter C. Farrell Jr., "Bridging Social Networks and Female Labor Force Participation in a Multi-Ethnic Metropolis," in *Prismatic Metropolis: Analyzing Inequality in Los Angeles*, ed. Lawrence D. Bobo, Melvin L. Oliver, James H. Johnson Jr., and Abel Valenzuela (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000).

Creating bridging social capital will become even more critical as the nation grows more crowded and diverse and seeks to maintain social harmony and prosperity.

The "C2C" Principle. The cultural disempowerment of citizens is a cause of the decline in individual willingness to assume leadership roles in civic life. In the emerging language of the "dot com" world, C2C refers to communications that occur "consumer to consumer." We expand that definition to mean "citizen to citizen" and "community to community." Vertical communication between "experts" and "laymen" has come to characterize too much of our interactions and has legitimized the illegitimate notion that regular folks don't have much to offer one another. Efforts to build social capital must strengthen horizontal communication and reciprocity among peers. Self-help groups are founded on this principle and have used it successfully to fight alcoholism and help people cope with traumatic events in their lives.

A Civic Renaissance

This is not the first time that America has had to overcome a crisis of civic life. During the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era, spanning roughly 1870-1915, rapid industrialization, immigration, technological change, and urbanization disrupted traditional patterns of community organization. These forces loosed people from the structures, on the farm or in the old country, that had anchored their lives, and proceeded to thrust them into a state of personal uncertainty and social disorganization. Predictably, the nation showed symptoms associated with declining social capital: crime waves, political corruption, urban decay, a widening income gap, and poorly functioning schools.

Alarmed by these trends, civic and social entrepreneurs from San Francisco to Denver to Chicago to Boston set about creating a new set of institutions to create community in ways that fit their new lives. They led others to connect with one another and to change a system that was no longer working. Indeed, many of the nation's most prominent voluntary organizations, most significant political reforms, and most visionary organizers were products of that time. From Jane Addams to Teddy Roosevelt, from the private ballot to female suffrage, from the NAACP to the YMCA, the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era produced a legacy that has served the nation well for more than a century.

Today, as we enter a new century fraught with vast demographic and technological challenges, we need to harness the civic energy that our Progressive forebears found, repeating their feats while learning from their errors. We need to become civic and social entrepreneurs who create social-capital-building institutions suiting our times and honoring our values: diversity, tolerance,

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[9] Marshall Ganz, "Resources and Resourcefulness: Strategic Capacity in the Unionization of California Agriculture, 1959-1966." *American Journal of Sociology*, 105 (4), January 2000, 1003-1062.

Pull-out text sources: On the relative benefits of joining groups versus not smoking see James S. House, Karl R. Landis, and Debra Umberson, "Social Relationships and Health," *Science* 241 (1988), 540-545: Lisa F. Berkman, "The Role of Social Relations in Health Promotion" *Psychosomatic Medicine* 57 (1995), 245-254: and Teresa E. Seeman, "Social Ties and Health: The Benefits of Social Integration" *Annual of Epidemiology* 6 (1966), 442-451. For information on the connection between commuting time and social capital, see B*owling Alone,* p. 213.

inclusiveness, equality, fairness, compassion, hope, and public spiritedness. We need a new civic renaissance.

The Saguaro Seminar Journey

The Saguaro Seminar is composed of leaders of institutions that have been struggling, each in its own way, to rebuild civic bonds and restore connections among individuals. We are a diverse group of about three dozen people who, for three years, have met several times a year to deliberate about the state of social capital in America and to debate proposals for reinvigorating civic life. Our group includes young adults at the beginning of their careers and older adults heading into retirement. We come from a wide variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds and hold a range of religious beliefs. We represent small towns and large cities; East, Midwest, and West; and North and South. Among us are clergy members and political leaders, union officials and businesspeople, non-profit executives and philanthropists, professors and community organizers, artists and youth workers. In the course of our professional and extracurricular lives, most of us have moved in and out of several different fields (from for-profit to non-profit work, for example) and straddled dual roles (such as preacher and charity executive) at any given time. We are Republicans and Democrats who share a concern about frayed social bonds and the cynicism and alienation souring our public life. We discuss our values in greater detail in the Appendix, "Changing the Wind."

In the next five chapters, we explore five institutional arenas in which the business or rebuilding social capital must take place. In each chapter, we discuss the particular advantages of each category of institution in reengaging Americans; outline historical trends relevant to building social capital in each institutional arena; and offer guiding principles and specific recommendations in the five arenas for turning around our civic decline. The five chapters are as follows:

The Workplace. This chapter examines how the assumptions, laws, and structures of employment can be transformed to bolster family and civic life.

The Arts. This chapter examines the potential of artists and cultural organizations to unite people in creative endeavors that build and celebrate community.

Politics and Government. This chapter examines troubles plaguing American democracy and suggests ways that citizens and political leaders can enhance civic interest and participation.

Religion. This chapter examines the role of houses of worship and other faith-based organizations in healing spiritual, cultural, and social problems.

Schools, Youth Organizations, and Families. This chapter examines ways to engage America's young people, who are the next generation of social capitalists.

We conclude with thoughts on how to build a civic renaissance in a post-modern nation of interstates, internationalism, and the Internet.

Our Discussion: Rebuilding our Civic Infrastructure

Our three years of discussions have reinforced our fear of the status quo: Americans face real dangers if we do nothing about our civic malaise. Individually and collectively we must find ways to erase our social capital deficit, or we will no longer have, to paraphrase civic leader Jimmy Carter, a society as good as its people. We must act now to reconnect ourselves with the larger civic project that is the United States. It will take a critical mass of outspoken and visionary individuals and institutions to make this happen. Cynicism is our greatest enemy.

The challenges to rebuild our civic infrastructure are collectively huge, but not Herculean for any given individual. What if every American entertained friends a few more times per year? What if every teacher had one more discussion per month with students about issues in the local community? What if every candidate for public office asked for campaign volunteers in the same letter asking for campaign contributions? What if every boss gave his or her employees paid time off to attend parent-teacher conferences? These quiet, small steps could multiply in wholly unexpected and significant ways. We ask you to become part of this new movement, both by changing your own lives in small but meaningful (and enjoyable) ways and by recruiting friends, colleagues, and relatives to this most civic of causes.

WORK AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Work is an increasingly important part of our lives. The average working American spends the majority of his or her waking hours on the job. Some of us live and breathe our work. Others of us work to pay our mortgages. Either way, the workplace has become an important source of social capital for millions of Americans – a center of meaning, membership, and mutual support. More than ever, we find our close friends and life partners on the job, we serve our communities through work-organized programs, and we use the office as a forum for democratic deliberation with people different from ourselves. Countless studies show that a workplace with strong social capital enhances workers' lives and improves the employer's bottom line.

At the same time, growing numbers of us feel that work, with its grueling hours and traffic-snarled commutes, is taking over our lives and depriving us of time with family, friends and community. Recently, nearly two-thirds of American employees said they wanted to work less, an average of two hours a day less if possible.[1] And press accounts have begun to document the dizzying decline of down-time, as voicemail, email, pagers, and cell phones have created the expectation that frazzled workers should be constantly on call.[2] The workplace plays a dual social capital role – nurturing it in some ways, draining it in others. Social capitalists simply cannot re-engage citizens civically without working through employers and job-based communities to ease the acute tensions between our personal, professional, and civic lives. To do so, however, will require a wholesale shift in the way we think about work.

As the new millennium dawns, we call on workers, employers, and policy makers to lead a mass social movement to change the outdated laws, norms, and assumptions that have allowed our work culture to undermine our civic culture. Two decades ago we began to recognize that our private lives affect our professional lives.[3] Now we must recognize that the structure of modern work profoundly shapes our communities. People cannot compartmentalize their private, professional, and civic lives. The job-related decisions that employees and employers make have serious consequences for society as a whole. The norms and structures of private employment are a public issue. Since the beginning of the century, America has moved from a single-minded focus on the needs of employers to a broader focus on the needs of employers *and* workers. We now need to think even more broadly. We need to focus on the needs and interdependence of employers, workers, and *communities*. We must recognize in fundamental ways that people are more important than the work they do.

Periodically, throughout our history, we have had an unemployment crisis. Now, amid unparalleled prosperity, we have an employment crisis. Worker anxiety, strain, and

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[1] James T. Bond, Ellen Galinsky, and Jennifer E. Swanberg, *The 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce* (New York: Families and Work Institute, 1998), p. 8.

[2] See, for example, Katie Hafner, "For the Well Connected, All the World's an Office," *New York Times*, 30 March 2000.

[3] For an overview, see Ellen Galinsky and Arlene A. Johnson, *Reframing the Business Case for Work-Life Initiatives* (New York: Families and Work Institute, 1998); and Dana E. Friedman and Arlene A. Johnson, *Moving From Programs to Culture Change: The Next Stage for the Corporate Work-Family Agenda* (New York: Families and Work Institute, 1996).

disgruntlement have become pressing political issues, in part because the American workplace is undergoing changes of a magnitude not seen in more than a century. These changes, both structural and demographic, have the potential to destroy social capital, but they also have the potential to reinvigorate it. Proponents of work-based social capital strategies must figure out how to turn the new economy and the new way of work to advantageous ends.

Unlike churches, schools and arts institutions, most employers are not inherently interested in building community, because they see it as outside the scope of their objectives. Instead, most employers focus on generating financial capital, not social capital. There is, however, a compelling "business case" to be made that employers would benefit by assuming a larger role in civic revival. Social capital helps employers in myriad, measurable ways.

The Role of the Workplace in Building Social Capital

The workplace plays a central role in nurturing social capital and can do more. Places of employment – what could be called "work-based communities" – are composed of tens of millions of Americans, many of whom found their primary communities elsewhere fifty years ago. Today, nearly three-quarters of adult men and nearly six in ten adult women are employed at least part time.[4] The dual earner couple with kids, an anomaly two generations ago, is now the most common family type in the labor force.[5] In fact, over three-quarters of women with school-aged children are employed.[6] Two-thirds of working men who are in couples with children have an employed spouse.[7]

The American workplace generates social capital in three broad ways. First, the job is where people build trusting relationships based on mutual assistance. Second, workplaces act as recruiting grounds for individuals and community organizations that are building social capital outside the office or factory walls. Third, employers contribute as organizations – by sponsoring volunteer teams, by donating money to worthy causes, and by instituting "work-life" programs to make it easier for employees to meet family and community obligations.

Workplaces as communities. Because record numbers of Americans are employed, the workplace has become the forum where many people meet their closest friends. White-collar, pink-collar, and blue-collar workers alike put in long hours together, eat meals together, and sometimes travel on business trips together – creating fertile soil for friendships. Surveys in the 1980s found that nearly half of employed Americans had at least one close friend from work. Nearly one in five said that at least half of their closest friends were co-workers.[8] And nine out of ten people feel a part of a community at work and look forward to being with co-workers each day.[9] Studies have

[4] These percentages refer to adults 20 years and older who were employed in the civilian labor force as a fraction of the entire population of 20+ adults. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 2000.
[5] Galinsky and Johnson (1998), p. 2.
[6] Galinsky and Johnson (1998), p. 1.
[7] Figure includes married and partnered men. Source: Galinsky and Johnson (1998), p. 1.
[8] Stephen R. Marks, "Intimacy in the Public Realm: The Case of Co-workers," *Social Forces*, 72 (3), March 1994, 843-858.
[9] Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg (1998).

found that the workplace, more than neighborhoods or even voluntary associations, provides the prime location where Americans discuss important issues, including politics.[10]

The workplace is an especially important source of social capital in an increasingly fragmented and diverse society. As growing numbers of people lack the comfort of a nuclear family, a religious or fraternal community, or even a tight-knit neighborhood, the job site has become a place to build stable, caring, long-term relationships. One study even suggested that, for some Americans, the workplace often serves as a sanctuary from the stresses and strains of marriage, child rearing, and household maintenance.[11] In addition, workplaces are among the most integrated settings in our lives. They are more diverse, on average, than our neighborhoods, houses of worship, and voluntary organizations. It is on the job that one is most likely to encounter, and work closely with, someone of a different race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, social class, political ideology, or regional heritage. In short, American workplaces represent the ripest venue for "bridging social capital," in which people connect across social divides. This is the form of social capital that is scarcest and perhaps most important as the nation expands and fragments.

Workplaces as Networks. Besides affording a place to build friendships, the workplace offers useful networks for life outside the office or factory wall. Recent surveys suggest that the workplace is an important but under-appreciated source of volunteer labor. Roughly one in ten Americans were recruited by a work colleague to give time to a good cause, and places of employment were second only to houses of worship as organizational sources of volunteers for non-profit groups.[12] A recent in-depth study with several hundred workers concluded that Americans, especially young adults, "increasingly find their voluntarism at the *site* of their work organizations and perform them with co-workers outside of work."[13]

Workplaces as Community Institutions. Workplace social capital is valuable both in its own right and as a potential resource for building community and promulgating civic values elsewhere. Beyond serving as organizational networks, businesses often give back to their communities through formal philanthropic initiatives. Corporations gave away an estimated $11-billion in 1999, or 6% of all charitable giving.[14] Equally important but harder to quantify are the countless hours that corporate executives, non-profit leaders, and small business owners spend annually serving on the boards of community organizations, spearheading fund-raising drives, and populating the boards, commissions, and task forces that do so much of America's civic work. More than 90% of corporate executives surveyed recently said that they encouraged their employees to become involved in community service. Fully 50% of executives said they had

[10] Marks (1994); Diana C. Mutz and Jeffrey J. Mondak, "Democracy at Work: Contributions of the Workplace Toward a Public Sphere" (Unpublished ms., April 1998).
[11] Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1997).
[12] Virginia A. Hodgkinson and Murray Weitzman, *Giving and Volunteering in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector, 1996). The 1994 and 1999 volumes reached similar findings.
[13] Maria T. Poarch, "Civic Life and Work: A Qualitative Study of Changing Patterns of Sociability and Civic Engagement in Everyday Life" (Ph.D. Diss., Boston University, 1997), p. 246.
[14] Ann Kaplan, *Giving USA* (New York: AAFRC Trust for Philanthropy, 2000), (http://www.aafrc.org/CHAR.HTM).

made service a part of their corporate mission statement, and 90% said volunteerism builds teamwork, improves morale, and attracts better employees.[15]

Over the past 20 years, American businesses have contributed in yet another way: through "work-life" programs aimed at freeing employees to take care of family and civic obligations. The programs – everything from flexible leave time to on-site child care and elderly care assistance programs – were created because corporations recognized that stressed-out employees are not productive employees. In a recent survey, two-thirds of employees said it was fairly easy to take time off from work when they needed to take care of a family or personal issue; and nearly half said they had some flexibility in determining their workday schedule.[16] In addition, many employees got direct help in meeting family needs: 25% said their employer provided information and referrals for elder care; 20% said their employer offered a child care referral service; and 11% said they had access to day care at or near the place of work.

Changes in the Social Organization of Work

As the workplace has become an important community for growing numbers of Americans, the American economy and economic institutions have been undergoing revolutionary changes over the past three decades. These changes are multifaceted, and their effects on our nation's stock of social capital have yet to be understood or assessed. The "new way of work" has the potential either to decimate or to revive norms of reciprocity and patterns of participation. Whether the net result is positive or negative depends largely on how we as a society mitigate the problems and channel the opportunities that these structural and economic changes are creating. In short, we need to grapple with the fact that the choices we make in our work lives, and the choices imposed on us, have social (as well as personal) implications. The movement of women from voluntary community work to paid employment, the proliferation of free-lance jobs, the computerization of office workstations, and the lengthening commutes hastened by suburban sprawl – these developments and others affect not only the individual involved but the larger social fabric, as well.

Women in Paid Work

The most notable change in the American workplace over the past generation or two is demographic. Since 1970, roughly one-third of homemakers have moved from kitchen to office, as millions of women discarded their mothers' lives of domestic labor and community volunteering in favor of a paid career outside the house. The movement of women into paid employment has dramatically affected both their lives and the patterns of family and community care.

For many of these women, work is a choice, from which they derive economic, psychological, and emotional rewards. Working women gain access to new and important stocks of social capital, especially professional networks and co-workers. However, for many women work is not

[15] Points of Light Foundation, *Corporate Volunteer Programs: Benefits to Business*, Report 1029, Fact Sheet (Washington, n.d.).
[16] Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg, (1998), p. 10.

a choice. Growing rates of divorce, single motherhood, and late marriage, to say nothing of the rising living costs, have created economic demands on women that were far less pronounced a generation ago.

Whether out of choice or necessity, joining the paid workforce places new strains on these women's time, and by extension on the families and community organizations that traditionally have relied on unpaid female labor. Entering the paid workforce has not kept women from serving civic organizations, in roles such as scout leaders and Chamber of Commerce committee members. But the nation has not devised suitable remedies for the time bind that is squeezing waitress mom, corporate mom and soccer mom alike. And while men strive to pick up some of the slack – taking kids to the doctor, attending PTA meetings, and so forth – family needs still seem to exceed available time. The time crunch has been exacerbated by the aging of workers' loved ones. In any given week, one in seven workers is caring for an elderly relative or friend.[17] In fact, the Families and Work Institute reports that one in five American workers belongs to the "sandwich generation" – simultaneously caring for children *and* elderly relatives.[18]

The Service and Information Age

One hundred years ago, the economy was dominated by farmers, factory workers, and shop owners. Today, the fastest growing segments of the economy are in personal services and technology. In principle, these lines of work afford greater flexibility, in terms of work hours and location, than did the assembly-line or office jobs of old, and that flexibility holds both advantages and disadvantages for building social capital.

In part because the nation is moving toward an economy based on services and information technology, our labor force is increasingly characterized by temps, free-lancers, contract workers, and telecommuters who may set their own schedules and agendas, but often lack job security, worker benefits, and long-term ties to a physical plant. The Labor Department estimates that up to 5.6 million Americans are "contingent" workers, doing short-term contract projects, temping, or working "on call."[19] While still a small minority of U.S. workers, this contingent work force is expected to grow as employee benefits become increasingly costly and information-and-technology services become a larger share of the economy.

At-home workers are leading an even more important revolution in the social organization of work. A quickly growing number of people – more than 10 million and counting – officially perform at least some of their job at their residence, either because they are self-employed or because they need not do their regular work at an office. And the vast majority of these at-home workers are in traditional families (married couples with offspring), from whose ranks the most dedicated civic volunteers have traditionally come.[20] That at least some people in this category are able to escape the office is a good sign for building social capital in the broader community.

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[17] Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg (1998), p. 15.
[18] Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg (1998), p. 15.
[19] This estimate is from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Contingent and Alternative Employment Arrangements," December 21, 1999, at http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/conemp.nws.htm
[20] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Work At Home in 1997" (at http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/homey.nws.htm).

A similarly dramatic change is under way among "flexible" workers, those who work full time but set their own schedules. This group now constitutes more than a quarter of the labor force, up from less than one-sixth a decade ago.[21] Not surprisingly, those who could opt for flexible schedules are concentrated in executive and management roles and are far rarer among administrative personnel, service workers, and blue-collar laborers. The unequal distribution of flexible scheduling has troubling implications regarding who can and cannot actively participate in rebuilding social capital.

Sprawl

The rising demand for "flex time" and "flex space" among workers is a partial consequence of the suburbanization and "exurbanization" of the population since World War II. Like so many of the everyday problems identified in this report, what looks like a private struggle to find time to spend with family and neighbors actually reflects deliberate choices we've made as a society. For example, largely to make homeownership more affordable, we have chosen to pave highways and build spread-out housing developments far beyond the core cities, and in the process we have created a car-based culture that deprives us of quality time with our families and precludes the sort of casual interaction that characterizes tight-knit urban neighborhoods. Each additional 10 minutes of commuting time cuts all forms of civic engagement (such as attending public meetings and volunteering) by 10%.[22] As Americans have become fed up with the unintended consequences of suburbanization, many civic and government leaders have begun seriously to explore innovative ways to replace sprawl with "smart growth," including everything from creating town centers in new communities to rehabilitating the housing stock in distressed older ones.

As the homogeneous corporate employment of old yields to a more flexible one, social capitalists must ensure that trust, camaraderie, and civic engagement do not suffer. Over both the short and long term, therefore, we must engage in a nationwide project of fundamentally rethinking the institutions that govern work so that they reinforce social capital in our families, our networks of friends, and our communities.

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[21] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Workers on Flexible and Shift Schedules in 1997 Summary," 26 March 1998 (at http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/flex.nws.htm).

[22] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), p. 213.

A Historical Precedent

This is not the first time in the nation's history that changes in the structure of our work lives have forced us to rethink our assumptions about the relationship between employment and the imperatives of family and civic life. In the last third of the 19th century, during the industrial revolution, nearly one-third of the American work force moved from rural farm communities to industrial urban jobs. At the same time, America experienced an influx of immigrants eager to settle in its newly bustling cities. These mass migrations from farms and foreign lands to factories disrupted old patterns of social engagement without spontaneously creating opportunities to connect in new ways. Then, as today, a booming economy created enormous optimism and opportunity, but also left unorganized workers vulnerable to exploitation.

Progressive-era reformers identified this social capital deficit and set about creating organizations and championing laws to buffer individuals from the excesses of industrial life. Often times, these efforts were conducted in concert with labor unions, whose ranks swelled with isolated workers seeking economic protections and the rewards of belonging to a community.[23] Equally important, through powerful rhetoric and organizing, this generation of remarkable social and labor leaders touched off a shift in the way everyday folks thought about industrial work. Where employment (say, of women or children) was once considered a private matter, it became, thanks to reformers, an issue of public concern and democratic deliberation. The Progressive reformers told us that, though a child's baling hay on the farm was a family decision, thousands of children stitching garments in an urban factory was most certainly a community issue.[24] Delivering a powerful message that the private norms and public laws that until then had governed employment no longer made sense, these reformers set out on a mission of cultural and political change, promulgating new norms and laws that would resonate, or "click" with everyday Americans. By the 1910s, thanks to a collective cultural "click" it seemed sensible and right to impose limits on child labor, worker hours, and unsafe practices in factories, and to create protections such as workmen's compensation and the minimum wage. The Progressives even had their own version of flextime for civic activities. By the early 1900s, roughly half the states required employee leave on election day so workers could cast their ballot.[25] The cultural and legal transformation continued until the New Deal a generation later.

Today, we need a similar legal and social revolution in the way we fit work into our lives. We need to recognize that the proliferation of dual earner couples has strained community organizations relying on volunteer labor. We need to acknowledge that sprawl and lengthening commutes have deprived family members of time with one another and with neighbors. We need to appreciate that home-based work and contingent work might have an impact on social capital. Most of all, we need to accept that the effect of this new social organization of work is a public question, not a merely private one.

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[23] See Foster Rhea Dulles & Melvyn Dubofsky, *Labor in America: A History*. 4th ed. (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1984), p. 196.

[24] See, for example, Irwin Yellowitz, *Labor and the Progressive Movement in New York State, 1897-1916* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965).

[25] Milton Brooke, ed. *Growth of Labor Law in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1967), p. 298.

Building on a Solid Foundation

We are mindful that cultural "clicks" do not happen overnight. It took decades for U.S. society and laws to catch up to the realities of the industrial revolution. Just as our Progressive Era forebears did, we first must identify the nature and magnitude of the changes going on beneath our feet. We then must devise workable ways of adjusting to them, and build broad public support for those changes.

Already, some far-sighted employers, policy entrepreneurs, and political leaders have taken small, yet bold steps to take make work and community more compatible. Each of these efforts, aided in some cases by technological advances, has the potential to move America toward the ultimate goal of realigning work with social capital.

In the business world, some cutting-edge companies subsidize volunteer time for individual workers and sponsor team-based service projects in the community. Other companies have focused on building social capital within the office walls – for example, by reconfiguring the physical layout to encourage social and work-related interaction and by eliminating "executives-only" areas that hinder the productive flow of information between layers of the corporate hierarchy. Many employers are also becoming friendly toward flexible work patterns, allowing employees to set their own hours and take "personal days" for family reasons. At least one quarter of Fortune 500 companies say they allow employees regularly to telecommute from home.[26]

At the government level, policy makers have begun to introduce legislation that would ease the time bind on working families. The signature piece of legislation to date is the Family and Medical Leave Act, a 1993 law requiring large employers to let most workers take up to three months of unpaid leave to recover from health problems, to care for a new child, or to look after an immediate family member in need. Recently, the Clinton Administration rewrote federal labor regulations to allow states to provide up to 12 weeks of unemployment insurance to new parents who want to stay home with their children, although no state has followed through with legislation to provide such coverage. Other proposals at the federal and state levels have included offering income-tax credits for people providing long-term care to aging or sick relatives; requiring that contingent workers receive pay and benefits commensurate with their contributions; and requiring employers to allow working parents to take unpaid time off for children's medical appointments, teacher conferences, and so forth.

Challenges to Work-Based Strategies for Building Social Capital

As the nation begins to invent new ways of living and working, considerable challenges still remain between the lofty promise of workplace-based re-engagement and its realization.

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[26] Associated Press, "Telecommuting Takes Hold Despite Manager Resistance," 3 July 1997, citing a study by the consulting firm KPMG.

The first challenge is to provide a compelling economic rationale to employers. Privately, many employers may be sympathetic to calls for increased social capital, even as they are understandably skeptical about whether such efforts serve the corporate bottom line. The business of business *is* business, after all. A few tantalizing studies from a variety of academic disciplines suggest that social capital building is a profitable endeavor. Studies have shown that workers' levels of social capital are an important predictor of employee satisfaction, which, in turn, predicts productivity and "good citizenship" toward one's fellow workers. A recent study by the Families and Work Institute concluded that on-the-job social capital, far more than salary and fringe benefits, determined how satisfied, committed, productive, and loyal employees were.[27] In addition, compelling evidence suggests that employers benefit in significant and measurable ways when they help employees meet family and community obligations – such as by subsidizing child care, offering paid parental leave or flextime, and training supervisors to be supportive of work-family conflicts. In study after study, these policies have proved cost-effective by reducing employee absenteeism, discipline problems, and stress, and by increasing productivity, satisfaction, tenure, and willingness to "go the extra mile" for the company.[28] Helping employees to develop strong networks outside the workplace can also benefit companies as they search for new customers and markets. Finally, strategies to build social capital within the workplace will also help to build human capital (such as skills and knowledge), making the effort a low-cost investment in the firm's productivity.

Of course, to many small and community-rooted businesses, the important link between social capital and the bottom line is old hat. As a Saguaro participant and small business owner observed: "Because we are not accountable to stock analysts, exchanges, and detached and distant shareholders driven only by bottom line, and can take a longer view, we remain accountable to the most important people: our customers and local communities. We have to see those people at the market, at church, at the movies, etc. Axiom: Every small business must build trust among, and have and maintain close ties to, actual and potential local customers and suppliers. Unlike large businesses, small and micro businesses do not need government to tell them to do what they already do."

A second challenge to building social capital through job-based strategies is the uncertainty, anxiety, and distrust that often mar workplace relations. Corporate mergers and acquisitions – which escalated throughout the 1980s and reached an all-time high in the late 1990s – caused real disruptions in the work environment. The recession-inspired downsizing wave of the late 1980s and early 1990s shattered the illusion that bonds of reciprocal loyalty between employer and employee protected white-collar jobs. More recently, the "dot com" frenzy of Internet start-ups and shut-downs has begun to have some of the same effects: anxiety and insecurity among workers and a shared assumption that no one should or can stay in one job for too long. Ironically, parental benefit policies *themselves* may increase overwork among non-parent employees, who are often expected to fill the void created during parents' absences.[29] Although

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[27] Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg (1997).
[28] Galinsky and Johnson (1998).
[29] James T. Bond, Ellen Galinsky, Michele Lord, Graham L. Staines, and Karen R. Brown, *Beyond the Parental Leave Debate: The Impact of Laws in Four States* (New York: Families and Work Institute, 1991), p. iv.

studies show that non-parents are usually glad to help their colleagues, proponents of flexible work must take care, both in their discourse and their policy proposals, to recognize that all citizens, not just parents, are necessary to rebuilding the nation's stock of social capital. Because of transformations in the economy, and in the demography of employment, the workplace grounds are shifting, and may thus be difficult places to plant seeds of community.

Finally, some of the most promising strategies to regenerate social capital in the workplace may face substantial political hurdles. Traditionally, and particularly in recent decades, the federal government has been reluctant to impose programs on business that are designed to achieve socially desirable ends. Small businesses and non-profit organizations, which together make up the vast majority of employers, would likely find government attempts to impose new rules or requirements on them especially burdensome. That is not to say that all business regulation is impossible. Congress in 1977 passed the Community Reinvestment Act, which required banks and thrifts to do business in under-served urban areas; in 1990 the Americans With Disabilities Act was passed; and in 1993, Congress passed the Family and Medical Leave Act, which afforded benefits to employees of middle-and-large-sized firms. The political battles over policies were intense, and the laws took years of concerted grassroots lobbying and the right set of political circumstances to be realized. Any legislation requiring employers to take part in shoring up social capital would likewise face a long, uphill, and not necessarily successful political battle. Voluntary strategies are more likely to succeed in the short term.

We call on all employers to commit themselves to building a more civic America. Although workplace attempts to rebuild social capital will need to consider employers' economic interests, workplace transformations, and political limitations, these obstacles can and must be overcome. Building social capital is a means to the ends that both employers and employees value: trust and teamwork among co-workers, cooperative relations between workers and management, and a more efficient and productive labor force.

Principles of Building Work-Based Social Capital

Good workplace approaches to re-engaging Americans ought to be guided by several principles:

Principle 1: Bridge Occupational Divides. Programs to encourage deeper civic involvement should be designed by and for all levels of the hierarchy – top executives, mid-level managers, receptionists and mailroom clerks, and part-time and contract workers. Ideally, projects should ensure that the well-paid and powerful work side by side with those struggling to ascend from the occupational bottom rung. It is a sad reality that the higher up you go in many organizations, the less racial and gender integration you find. It follows that social capital building that crosses functional divides will bridge cultural divides, as well.

Principle 2: "Legitimize" Social Capital from the Top. Workplaces offer a splendid opportunity to create bridging social capital, but no effort to engage the firm or its employees can realize its full potential without the unwavering support of the top person. Organizations take on the values of their leaders. Top officials ought to provide both the financial resources to facilitate workplace engagement and the political capital to ensure that civic values become a true corporate goal. Top

executives provide instant legitimacy to projects that are novel, risky, or otherwise do not conform to standard operating procedures.

***Principle 3: Make Social Capital Pay*.** Employers, including those in the non-profit and government sectors, well understand the logic of the market. Market incentives motivate and channel action in the economic sphere. Likewise, incentive structures motivate and channel action in the civic sphere. Thus, firms and agencies should provide tangible, meaningful opportunities and rewards for employees, departments, divisions, and branch offices to become socially and civically engaged. Efforts to increase America's stock of social capital should be actively encouraged, rather than greeted with apathy or suspicion. If employers make social capital pay, they will be rewarded with more engaged, more committed, healthier, and better networked employees.

Principle 4: Boost the Civic Potential of the "New Workforce." As they make policy decisions, employers and legislators should ensure that the growing ranks of non-traditional employees are included so they can contribute fruitfully to their professional and geographic communities. It is ultimately up to employers and policy makers to design norms and regulations that will effectively govern the new economy while not harming social relations.

Guided by these principles, we recommend that employers, employees, and government policy makers focus on making economic institutions the engines of civic renewal.

Recommendations: Building Social Capital Through Places of Employment

We have developed nine recommendations, falling into three broad categories. These categories are building social capital within the workplace; helping employees to build social capital in their families and neighborhoods; and putting firms at the center of civic renewal. Our recommendations involve both voluntary measures and legislative measures. Some will be quite easy and non-controversial to implement; others will require a longer period of planning and building political support. Happily, many recommendations will be mutually reinforcing.

Much as we like to complain about our jobs, most of us actually enjoy the social environment at work. Important social capital building is taking place every day at people's jobs. The challenge is to find ways to expand the opportunities for forging meaningful and lasting connections, and to leverage that energy for civic ends. We ask employers to think of themselves not merely as administrators at places of economic enterprise, but also as managers in places of civic enterprise.

***Recommendation 1: Create Workplace-Based Civic Associations*.** Employers should encourage employees to form office-based chapters of national voluntary organizations, such as the Red Cross, the League of Women Voters, or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Just as the United Way collects funds under the stewardship of workplace-based committees, so too might non-profit civic associations recruit members, hold meetings, and sponsor projects under the auspices of an employer or a geographic cluster of employers (such as high-technology zones). Many major voluntary associations have had trouble finding members in recent years because traditional recruitment networks have frayed and the sons and daughters of

yesterday's volunteers now spend much of their time at work. Allowing civic groups in the office door will help today's harried workers to participate in their community through networks and physical spaces that are convenient for them. Using job networks for civic organizing furthers our "Recycling" principle.

***Recommendation 2: Use the Workplace as Civic Forum*.** Offices, factories, and other institutions almost invariably have conference rooms and other large public spaces that go unused for part of the day. We urge firms to think creatively about how to use those spaces for civic events. For example, a company might introduce a Friday speakers' series where community leaders discuss their social and political work or lead employee discussions of pressing community and national issues. During election season, candidates for public office might be invited, on a non-partisan basis, to speak to employees or to debate one another. Companies and agencies could let workers reserve rooms for meetings of civic organizations with which the worker is involved.

Recommendation 3: Turn Workplaces into Sites of Civic Education. Recent research suggests that people are far more likely to take part in community work if they have civic skills – the ability to organize and run meetings, speak in front of large audiences, write persuasively, and so forth.[30] Many professional people learn such skills in the course of their jobs, but such on-the-job learning should not be limited to managers. Just as companies now frequently sponsor health and exercise classes to improve employees' physical fitness, so might firms sponsor courses to improve employees' *civic* fitness. Such courses might cover everything from public speaking and letter writing to community organizing and event planning. To build social capital within the workplace, employees willing to share these civic skills could teach co-workers, in keeping with our "C2C" principle. Furthering civic skill-building, many successful companies are switching to horizontal, team-based structures, which allow organization and leadership responsibilities to be distributed to more workers than under old-fashioned hierarchical structures. Of course, developing speaking, writing, and organizing skills would benefit not only America's civic infrastructure, but employees' job performance, as well.

Recommendations for Helping Employees to Build Social Capital in Their Families and Neighborhoods

Over the past generation, more and more employers have instituted policies and programs to help employees become better family members and better citizens. We applaud those farsighted employers that have understood the moral and business case for helping employees to manage their multiple obligations. We urge all employers to follow the lead of these companies. At the same time, given competitive pressures and a lack of education about the value of such programs, we also believe that the necessary revolution in the social organization of work could be catalyzed by state and federal legislation.

***Recommendation 4: Expand Leave Benefits for Parents*.** We endorse changing labor regulations to allow new parents to collect unemployment payments during unpaid parental leave. We urge

[30] Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

all 50 states to pass the required legislation to turn that concept into a reality. We also recommend that the Family and Medical Leave legislation covering leaves of absence in family emergencies be expanded to cover certain classes of non-emergencies, such as taking one's child to a routine medical check-up. Of course, we also endorse state proposals, such as one that passed in Massachusetts in 1998, that achieve the same ends.

In addition, we back proposals popular with organized labor to provide flexibility to employees facing crises. For example, we recommend that state or federal legislation be introduced that would allow workers to reduce their work hours by a set amount over a period of months without losing benefits or seniority. We support creating "leave banks," in which workers can donate their unused sick leave to fellow employees who have expended their own allotment of days off.

Recommendation 5: Give Time Off for Community Service. Several companies – including Timberland, Brinks, Hasbro, Stride Rite, and Sony Music Entertainment – have instituted policies allowing employees days off with pay to volunteer in their communities. The Home Depot's "Team Depot" initiative organizes employees around charities the company supports, providing community service, building parks, or offering other assistance. Many other companies have instituted volunteer leave as part of the "America's Promise" campaign for kids. These initiatives are a terrific start, but they are only a start. We recommend legislation requiring employers to grant unpaid leave to employees who wish to serve their communities (say, up to 48 hours per year). We also endorse allowing employees who work overtime to convert their overtime pay into time off. We recommend that if an employee takes a personal, vacation, or "comp" day to serve the community, only a half-day should be deducted from the time ledger. And we urge companies to allow employees flexibility when they need to leave early to attend a PTA meeting, for example, or to arrive late because they are busy planning a community event. For example, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City provides 58 hours a year of employee "banked" time that can be used as desired for public purposes. In any given workplace, diverse teams should decide what sorts of civic work qualifies for such programs.

Recommendation 6: Institute a System of Individual Work Contracts. Flextime, whether for family or civic purposes, is only a first step – one that has not been fully incorporated into the everyday work culture. A recent study suggested that, while many companies formally allow flextime, most have not made the necessary structural and attitudinal adjustments to allow employees to take advantage of such programs without worry. Corporate leadership is vital to ensuring that these programs are designed to succeed. And so we urge chief executives to create a culture in which it is clear to all that they will be evaluated on the quality of their work, not simply on the regularity of their "face time" while recognizing that some face time is integral to many jobs.

Ultimately, however, we would like the nation to move beyond the limited promise of flextime and usher in a radical new way of organizing our work lives. Where feasible, each employee should be allowed to negotiate an individual work contract with his or her employer that would cover the number of hours of work expected per month, with the specific work schedule left up to the employee to the extent possible; such employees would retain full benefits. Companies should make it as easy as possible for employees to work from home, except in cases where the

employees' work ties them to a physical plant or must be done in concert with others. We hope that such flex-contracting becomes a cultural norm and that businesses explore how technology can make this radically more flexible type of scheduling possible. Government might play a role in providing some venture funding for businesses to explore the development of such technologies.

These changes do not have to occur wholesale. Smaller victories toward this larger vision of radical flextime work are important. For example, an early version of flex-contracting is already in place. In Philadelphia, a Teamsters local negotiated a contract in which some soft-drink company workers are allowed to compress their workweek so that they toil longer hours on fewer days. For example, some workers are allowed to work their traditional 40-hour week in three consecutive 13.3-hour days, with the other four days off. We hope that non-unionized workers and organized labor will be able to negotiate such contracts with employers with increasing ease.

Recommendation 7: Provide Incentives for Community Service. There are all sorts of creative ways that employers can reward good works by employees and encourage them to do more. In Oklahoma, for example, the family-owned First Bethany Bank and Trust N.A. ties its charitable budget to the number of *hours* that employees donate to non-church charitable causes. As the number of hours volunteered goes up, so does corporate giving. The bank also considers volunteer hours as a factor in employees' merit raises. Such incentives should be extended and expanded by all good corporate citizens to their employees and communities. Good community citizenship could be made a factor in "employee of the month" determinations and in decisions about who serves on grant-making boards within companies. Employees who organize and coordinate office softball or other sports teams should receive something tangible for their efforts – a gift certificate to a bowling lane, or a charitable contribution in his or her name to a favorite cause. We applaud employers that rally behind the good works of employees. Such support not only enlarges our stock of social capital, but it also enhances the sense of community spirit within the workplace.

Recommendations for Putting Firms at the Center of Community Building

Many businesses have long recognized the value of giving back to their communities as "good corporate citizens" or practicing "business social responsibility." We call on non-profit groups, government agencies, and large and small businesses to redouble their efforts to be good, active citizens of their communities in the following ways.

Recommendation 8: Put Social Capital Formation at the Center of Corporate *Giving.* Because companies give away billions of dollars a year, they have enormous leverage in urging grant recipients to build community ties as they provide community services. For nearly two decades, private philanthropies, notably the Ford Foundation, have successfully used their grants as leverage to get non-profit groups to recruit more racially diverse boards and staffs. We suggest a similar strategy for corporate grant makers by including as a criterion for support a grant recipient's commitment to increasing community participation and strengthening relevant social networks. This recommendation flows from our "Social Capital Impact" principle.

Recommendation 9: Forge Community-Building Partnerships with Other Sectors. "Public-private partnerships" became all the rage in the 1980s, as exemplified by the proliferation of adopt-a-school programs, urban redevelopment coalitions, and other initiatives. Although there has been little systematic research on the extent to which such partnerships have succeeded or failed, we endorse such partnerships in principle, and we urge that the financial and human capital of businesses be focused on expanding opportunities for participation among people currently excluded from civic affairs. Bridging the social chasm between the well-to-do and the excluded should be a major goal of public-private partnerships. Business people and professionals from the non-profit and government sectors can serve as advisors and "vouching agents" for nascent community organizations, allowing them access to networks and resources that would otherwise be out of reach. Numerous studies over the years have documented the critical importance of networks and connections – that is, social capital – in economy-wide growth and company success. Social and civic entrepreneurs who aren't connected will be severely handicapped as they try to reach their potential. Conscious efforts to reach these people redound to everyone's benefit. Likewise, such partnerships benefit people of privilege by expanding their circle of relationships and allowing them to understand the community from different vantage points. These recommendations follow our "Bridging" principle.

Businesses have always had an important role in civic affairs. In many ways, the recommendations above represent merely a new twist on old ideas. But the experience of the late 1980s and early 1990s reminds us that we should not take employer social responsibility as a given. Businesses that provide incentives and resources for community building should themselves be rewarded. Local chambers of commerce, civic organizations, grant-making foundations, and universities should create award programs for especially community-minded businesses and promote these businesses' achievements. As they have already begun to do (for example, with Paul Newman's line of food products), individual consumers should make a point of patronizing stores, restaurants, manufacturers and other concerns that are exceptional corporate citizens – even if that means paying a little extra for a cheeseburger or a bar of soap.

Concluding Thoughts

Strategies that build social capital "inside the workplace" will surely lead to friendships "outside the workplace" and vice versa. Within each of these general approaches lies a great variety of potential ideas, concepts, projects, policies, programs, and initiatives that firms can pursue. We have suggested several among the many. Even as the range of social capital building opportunities is virtually limitless, some are likely to be more fruitful and realistic than others, given the economic and political constraints on different firms and agencies and the varying values and needs of different communities. How a firm might best engage itself and its employees, then, is ultimately a matter for internal deliberation and community consultation.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK
Working Today

"One of the earliest groups that got me interested in doing this was called Web Grrls," says Sara Horowitz, Executive Director of Working Today. "It was for women interested in technology. You would go to a loft in Soho and there was just a bunch of chairs. You would get up and say 'My name is Sara and I can give information about Such and Such, and what I need is So and So.' People would sit there and take down your need and then they would get back to you. It was face-to-face and then it was on-line. Social capital, even though it's a crucial piece of democracy, is not a product; it's a by-product…of doing something. We sometimes say, 'Oh, social capital, it would be so wonderful to build some,' but really it's 'this building or this project or program that needs to get started.' Social capital is about doing something…clear and definite."

The first project and major activity of Working Today is building links among associations, unions, non-profits and companies in Silicon Alley in Manhattan. "The number-one need that people here have is health insurance. And that's an immediate thing that people can understand and come together on. People will…join if there is a definite reason. Then we can…start connecting people [through a database]. We can say to all these individuals, 'Do you want to meet candidates? Do you want workshops? Can we create literal space or virtual space for you? What other kinds of things would you like to come together on?'" Horowitz believes you can build the social capital if you start from a place of need.

"A worker starts out from a point of self-interest and then makes the connection, 'hey, we're in this together.'" she explains. "The basis of democracy is the unromantic notion of self-interest. For example, think about…health insurance for the workers in the new media. Everything is funded by venture capital. The companies grow, or die, very quickly. Your company dies, you…get [a] job at another company that is growing fast. But that company dies, so you go to another one. It grows, then it disappears. You move on. So, even if you have the money for health insurance, you can't get the care and the coverage because you keep moving around like crazy. So, what we are doing is creating the first private sector portable benefits package that you can keep as you shift from here to there, whether you work as an employee or as a free-lancer. That will be funded with private money. And we're working on a plan for low-income people, too. That needs government money, but the delivery system is the same."

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ST. LOUIS/TWIN CITIES

Metropolis St. Louis/ Twin City Transplants

Amanda Doyle of St. Louis, says, "All of a sudden, there seems to be a rush of organizations focused on young working professionals…. I know of …groups in Ohio, California, Iowa, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Kansas, and Minnesota. Maybe it's because small town people move to the cities and are lonely.…maybe it's because so many people…raised in the suburbs – like my husband who was never really allowed to go into the city – are finding themselves living inside the cities and wanting to make them better…."When I left college," says Laurie Kersten, of Roseville, Minnesota, "I lost my friends. I was in Chicago and very alone. I would walk past a café or restaurant and hear people laughing together, and I would stand near the door and cry. Then I moved to the Twin Cities, where people already had lots of social capital, but were spending it among…[their long-time] friends and neighbors…. So in 1990 I put a notice in a local paper that announced a gathering of young professionals. I was a bit tricky; the notice implied that the organization already existed, and announced our 'next' meeting. At about 6:00 p.m., thirty people showed up. We were still going strong at 10:30. A little activity together makes a bridge…[to] really talk with each other." Twin City Transplants (TCT) was launched, an informal social organization "to help transplanted professionals…create a circle of friends, a *real* circle of friends, that builds community."

TCT now has over 500 loosely "professional" members, from their mid-twenties to their mid-forties. A large, informal group event ("Come Alone or Bring Friends") is scheduled every four to six weeks. Members are encouraged, and helped, to start sub-groups or arrange their own one-time events. A recent six-week schedule listed 23 events including restaurant outings, happy hours, game nights, bike tours, lectures, brunch after Mass, and a car pool trip to the State Fair. TCT organizes using post cards, e-mail, and a web site/electronic message board. Mindy, a relative newcomer to TCT, organized a "Saturday Night At The Movies Group." Forty-one people signed up on the Internet in three weeks; every Friday, they are e-mailed the film choice and directions to the theater. For some people, says Kersten, "the first step, and sometimes the hardest, is just to admit that you need people, that you don't have friends."

In the 1990's, a handful of young people returned from college to St. Louis, mostly to take jobs. They saw that almost all their high school friends hadn't come back – St Louis seemed to be a place that lots of young people avoided. So, in 1997, the returnees founded Metropolis St. Louis, to help make new friends and attract young people to the city and retain them. Now 1500 members strong, Metropolis is defined by president Doyle, as a "large civic organization with an edge..." that aims "to be as flexible and spontaneous as we can, while still pursuing serious civic projects." Doyle adds, "We created *Celebrate the City Week*. We organize voter registration drives and throw a big Halloween party. One…popular program is The Walk – a Thursday night pub-crawl that keeps St. Louis from rolling up the sidewalks at 5:00 p.m. But we also have a very heady…Metropolis Forum…to inform and create St. Louis' future leaders. We…get young professionals onto the boards of art groups, …corporate, civic and educational organizations. Our growth…has been almost exponential, partly because…[o]ur website is a huge part of who we are, and we get a ton of hits every day. If I saw a park clean-up that needed to happen fast, or [if I] suddenly needed more volunteers to help out at the public elementary school…, I can…e-mail…800 people and get the numbers I need. But, the downside is, we now need to start working harder to reach the people who aren't computer savvy or don't have access."

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THE ARTS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Czech president Vaclav Havel, a renowned playwright whose artistic voice became a resounding voice for democracy and civil society, has observed that the arts offer a unique means of connecting us to our common humanity.[1] Whether visual, musical, dramatic, or literary, the arts allow us to "create together" and to discover shared understandings. The creation and presentation of art often inspires a raft of civically valuable dispositions – trust, openness, honesty, cooperativeness, tolerance, and respect. From museums to open-air amphitheaters to dance studios, arts spaces are, at root, civic spaces. The arts are a superb means of building social capital.

It is tempting to see the arts as peripheral to rebuilding community. After all, art exists for its own sake – valuable for what it *is* as much as for what it might do. In part because artistic expression abides by such a lofty ideal, leading cultural organizations sometimes have held themselves aloof from the communities in which they are located. As a recent National Endowment for the Arts report observed,

> "In enshrining art within the temples of culture – the museum, the concert hall, the proscenium stage – we may have lost touch with the *spirit* of art: its direct relevance to our lives, [and] we may have stressed the specialized, professional aspects of the arts at the expense of their more pervasive, participatory nature. In the process, art became something that we watch other people do, usually highly skilled professionals, rather than something we do ourselves."[2]

But a growing body of research suggests that the arts can be a valuable engine of civic renewal. Indeed, more and more arts institutions are directing substantial resources to that cause. The arts can nurture social capital by strengthening friendships, helping communities to understand and celebrate their heritage, and providing a safe way to discuss and solve difficult social problems.

Whether we are spectators, performers, or producers, the arts provide a uniquely enjoyable way to build our stock of informal social capital. Two people who attend a Monet exhibit and later discuss the works over coffee have built social capital through a shared artistic experience. Doctors and laborers and students and retirees who sing together in the community chorus or perform in a local theater production have built social capital through a shared artistic experience. The conductor who leads the town band and the choreographer who stages a dance performance have built social capital through a shared artistic experience. Social capital can be built among spectators, performers, and producers – as well as across those groups.

Beyond the individual effects, the arts allow for public celebration and exploration of the meaning of community. Public art inspires civic pride, thereby uniting us in our appreciation of what we have collectively produced. For example, Somerville, Massachusetts, is dotted with huge murals depicting, among other things, the diverse ethnic groups that constitute the city's population; the

[1] See among other writings, "Post Modernism: The Search for Universal Laws" by Vaclav Havel, a speech delivered on the occasion of the Liberty Medal Ceremony in Philadelphia, 4 July 1994.
[2] Gary O. Larson, *American Canvas* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, 1997), p. 59.

array of civil servants who make the city work; the aspirations and dreams of local schoolchildren; and the site where George Washington first raised the colonial flag on the eve of the American Revolution. Artistic projects and rituals are often instrumental in allowing immigrants to honor their native heritage and in helping them navigate the uncertainties of life in a new country.

For native-born Americans and recent arrivals alike, the arts provide a safe means of bridging differences and resolving community conflict. For example, after the accidental death of an African-American youth and the retaliatory slaying of a Hasidic Jew put Brooklyn on the edge of racial warfare, a museum, historical society, and preservation group led neighborhood residents in creating the successful Crown Heights History Project, a community healing and learning process that fostered a new kind of communication and expanded tolerance through increased understanding. In our Saguaro meeting on the arts, we heard how the Washington, D.C.-based Freestyle Union assembled a highly diverse group of participants (professional and blue collar, young and old, varied classes and races) to practice rap in "cipher" sessions. We learned how Roadside Theater restored local storytelling and song performing, attracting non-religious and religious participants, wealthy and poor, southerners and northerners, whites and Native Americans.

In addition, the arts can serve as a powerful spur to civic dialogue. An especially moving, shocking, insightful, or original work might compel us to discuss social, spiritual, or political issues with friends and family members. For example, Maya Lin's Vietnam Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C., is a graceful piece of art that captures Americans' powerful and complex emotional memories of the war and serves as a space for contemplation, connection, and dialogue. In inner-city Houston, an Episcopal priest, working in partnership with the city's Museum of Fine Arts, helped poor kids paint a joyful mural next to a mass of gang graffiti – evoking commentary on the poignant mix of hope and hopelessness among neighborhood youths.[3]

Participation in the arts also strengthens democratic institutions. A major study of Italian regional government found a startlingly strong relationship between the number of local choral societies and the effectiveness of government institutions.[4] The implication is not that singing *per se* improves mail delivery, but rather that "communities that sing together" (literally and metaphorically) better achieve the government they desire. In recent years, mounting evidence shows that arts programs improve the challenging work facing government agencies, whether it is keeping kids healthy and safe, preventing crime, or beautifying dilapidated neighborhoods.[5]

Finally, and especially appropriate in these uncivil times, the arts "hath charms to soothe the savage breast" (to borrow from the English dramatist William Congreve). Scholars who study the emotions have found that dancing, playing music, and engaging in other artistic activities bring

[3] This example was spotlighted in the NEA's *American Canvas* report, p. 64.
[4] Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).
[5] Jenny C. Seham, "The effects on at-risk children of an in-school dance program" (Ph.D. Diss., Adelphi University, 1998); Steven Durland, "Maintaining Humanity: Interview with Grady Hillman About Arts-In-Corrections" in *The Citizen Artist: 20 Years of Art in the Public Arena*, ed. Linda Frye Burnham and Steven Durland (New York: Critical Press, 1997), pp. 251-256; and Larson, *American Canvas* (1997).

more joy than do many other leisure activities.[6] That joy in turn enhances our willingness to reach out and connect with others. At least one study has suggested that involvement in the arts, including as a spectator, can prolong your life.[7]

In sum, cultural endeavors offer social capital effects both direct and indirect, immediate and long lasting. The arts provide a powerful way to transcend the cultural and demographic boundaries that divide us and to find deeper spiritual connections with those like us. To use our phrasing, the arts create both "bridging" and "bonding" social capital.

Traditionally, however, arts institutions have done far more bonding than bridging, and it is rare for the same artistic production to do both simultaneously. Like neighborhoods and churches, many arts and cultural institutions are unofficially but unmistakably segregated by race, by socioeconomic class, and sometimes even by gender. This is in part because people naturally seek out those who are like them, and in part because the system of financing and presenting the arts traditionally has reinforced entrenched patterns of exclusion.

Fortunately, in recent years, the cultural world and its philanthropic supporters have begun to change. Many long-established arts institutions are taking steps to create more meaningful community connections and to broaden their reach. In St. Louis, for example, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra transformed itself from an elite institution into one that offers music classes in impoverished areas and performs with inner-city church choirs. These "bridging" activities have strengthened both the Symphony and the surrounding community alike.[8] A 1996 study found that more than half of all major-city arts agencies were involved in projects relating to AIDS; about the same fraction were involved in environmental protection; nearly two-thirds were involved in crime prevention; roughly nine out of ten were involved in helping at-risk youths; and about the same percentage tried to raise cross-cultural awareness.[9] With help from philanthropic foundations, arts organizations are increasingly being founded with an explicit aim to bridge inter-group chasms. The arts have the potential to promote such bridging social capital precisely because they can provide a safe space to shelve political and ideological differences, or at least manage those differences without conflict. We need not be of the same race, generation, gender, political party, religion, or income group to sing, act, or create together.

Trends in Arts Participation

The arts contribute greatly to our stock of social capital, and America boasts more cultural organizations today than ever before. Americans participate in the arts in countless ways, formal and informal, public and private, collective and solitary.

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[6] Michael Argyle, "Subjective Well-Being," in *In Pursuit of the Quality of Life*, ed. Avner Offer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 30-33.

[7] Lars Olov Bygren, Boinkum Benson Konlaan, and Sven-Erik Johansson, "Attendance at cultural events, reading books or periodicals, and making music or singing in a choir as determinants for survival: Swedish interview survey of living conditions," *British Medical Journal*, 3 (13), 1577-1580, 21 December 1996.

[8] Bruce Coppock (Executive Director, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra), "Speech to Grantmakers in the Arts." Unpublished ms., October 10, 1995.

[9] "United States Urban Arts Federation: A Report on the Arts Councils in the 50 Largest U.S. Cities," June 1996, p. 7, cited in *American Canvas*, p. 84.

On the formal side, the United States is home to some 21,750 non-profit arts, culture, and humanities organizations, according to federal government estimates. These officially recognized organizations hold an astonishing $37-billion in assets and spend $13.3-billion annually to enrich our understanding of truth, to enlarge our appreciation of beauty, and to give us insights into the human condition.[10] These organizations include small-town volunteer-led preservation societies, big-city art museums, and everything in between. And their numbers are growing faster than our population. From 1965 to 1992, according to the National Endowment for the Arts, the number of professional orchestras doubled, the number of opera companies nearly quintupled, the number of non-profit theater companies increased more than 12-fold, and the number of dance companies also increased 12-fold. The nation boasts 1,200 art museums, half of them established in the past generation. Today, all 50 states have arts agencies, as do 3,800 localities.[11]

Alongside these formally established organizations are tens of thousands of groups known collectively as the "unincorporated arts." Under this umbrella are non-professional and loosely organized church choirs, poetry slams, recital series, chamber music ensembles, quilting guilds, reading groups, hip-hop sessions, and other largely volunteer-run groups.[12] These forms of artistic expression often take place among friends in private homes and operate with neither budget nor bylaws. They represent an important, less visible form of social capital.

In many ways, the arts are flourishing in America, despite diminishing government support both at the federal and, sometimes, the state level. But, as with other forms of communal activity, there are troubling trends afoot. For one, we have come to *observe art together* far more often than we *do art together*. According to a 1997 national survey, 35% of Americans had visited an art museum in the past year, 25% had attended a musical, and 16% had gone to a classical music performance. [13] By contrast, fewer than 3% of Americans had acted in a publicly performed play, only 10% had performed in a choir or chorus, and just 11% had played music (and this is a generous estimate of musical social capital, as it includes those who played alone).[14] Spectator activities can be done singly or in a group; and to the extent that we "spectate together," these activities may help to build or reinforce social capital. We support arts spectatorship because it is intrinsically rewarding and can create social capital among spectators. And, obviously, without spectators, few of us would be as enthusiastic about performing together.

That said, spectatorship is a poor substitute for participation, which requires ongoing interactions, coordination, and trust. And this richer form of social capital is on the wane. Scattered evidence suggests that the gap between observation and participation has been growing over the past generation. For example, museum attendance has increased a modest 10% over the past dozen

[10] Data from the National Center for Charitable Statistics, Urban Institute, Washington, D.C. Based on charity registration data supplied by the Internal Revenue Service. See http://nccs.urban.org/fin_grp.pdf

[11] Data from Jason Edward Kaufman, "Introduction to the arts and social capital in America" (Cambridge, Mass.: The Saguaro Seminar, 1999), p. 3.

[12] Monnie Peters and Joni Maya Cherbo, "The missing sector: The unincorporated arts." *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, 28 (2), Summer 1998, 115-128.

[13] National Endowment for the Arts, "Survey of Public Participation in the Arts: Summary Report" (Washington, D.C.: NEA, 1997), Table 1, "Attendance at Arts Events: 1997," p. 15.

[14] National Endowment for the Arts, "Survey of Public Participation in the Arts: Summary Report" (Washington, D.C.: NEA, 1997), Table B, "Arts Participation," p. 34.

years, and attendance at rock/pop concerts is up by about a third. But examples of citizens producing culture together – town bands or jazz jamming or simply gathering around the piano, for example – are becoming scarcer. On average, we play musical instruments only half as often today as in the mid-1970s,[15] and the fraction of households where someone plays an instrument has fallen precipitously (from 51% to 38%) in that same time period.[16] What is more, analysis of survey data reveals a pattern now familiar: Middle-aged adults (the Baby Boomers) are far less likely than their same-aged counterparts in generations past to create art.

All available evidence suggests, in short, that we are becoming a nation of arts spectators more than arts participants, and this trend is likely to accelerate because of the generational patterns. This is a troubling omen for anyone who believes, as we do, in the vast promise of the arts to bring diverse people together and to enlarge our sense of common connections and linked fate.

Even amid these warning signs, we believe that the arts represent perhaps the most significant underutilized forum for rebuilding community in America. We call on artists, arts administrators, government officials, and everyday citizens with a modicum of unexpressed creativity to imagine new and innovative ways to use art to build social capital.

Principles of Building Arts-Based Social Capital

If the arts are to strengthen social capital, three principles should guide that work. These principles call our attention to the delicate balance between the different roles that arts and cultural institutions play in a democratic society. We hope to shift that balance toward a larger community role without undermining the important role of arts institutions as forums for the creation and display of intrinsically valuable works.

Principle 1: Look for Opportunities to Bridge. Given how well the arts may enable us to form trusting ties across race, income, gender, religious faith, and generations, we should seek out such opportunities regardless of our station: whether we are artists thinking about a new project, singers joining a chorus, single people trying to figure out what to do on Friday night, or grant makers wondering what arts projects to fund. We should always ask whether we are using the arts to connect with people unlike ourselves.

Principle 2: Revive Arts Organizations as Community Institutions. A hundred years ago, the arts were far more volunteer-based. Most towns had an opera house, a playhouse, a music hall, and a caroling society. Today, many arts institutions have become high-priced entertainment venues, where people go to consume culturally rather than to connect socially. We need to return to an era in which arts institutions were more akin to public libraries and town squares than to sports arenas and mall multiplexes. Doing so may require a difficult set of measures, including new funds, a reconfiguration of arts spaces, and changes in the way that institutions conceive of their mission. Using arts spaces as public spaces is an example of "recycling" social capital in that participation

[15] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000). Author's analysis of DDB Needham Life Style surveys. According to National Endowment for the Arts surveys of arts participation, lifetime exposure to music lessons declined from 47 percent in 1982 to 40 percent in 1992.
[16] *Music USA 1997* (Carlsbad, Calif.: National Association of Music Merchants, 1997), 37-38.

in entertainment may well create new networks that will increase individuals' participation in public affairs, volunteer activity, or religious life.

Principle 3: Include Artists and Cultural Institutions in Community Planning. Artistic endeavors and the institutions that sponsor them can achieve a host of important policy goals. Arts institutions can anchor neighborhood revitalization efforts, and cultural activities can help heal community divisions and make social programs more effective. However, while policy makers and political leaders have begun to understand the economic benefits of a strong cultural sector, they have not fully understood the civic benefits. To remedy that, leaders of the local arts community need to be incorporated fully into planning efforts, commissions, and programs at the neighborhood, city, state, and national levels.

Recommendations for Building Social Capital Through the Arts

The arts have a singular advantage in rebuilding social capital: cultural activities are enjoyable and fun. Unlike attending meetings or voting – what we call "civic broccoli" because they're good for all but unpleasant to many – artistic performance is akin to civic fruit. We have fun and enjoy the arts, even as they do us good. The enjoyable nature of the arts makes them perhaps the most promising, if neglected, means of building social capital.

We recommend that America's cultural institutions and the people who work within them create opportunities for political expression, community dialogue, shared cultural experiences, and civic work – all with an eye toward making citizen participation fun.

Recommendation 1: Increase Funding for "Community Arts." We recommend that private philanthropy and government arts agencies devote a greater share of their budgets to financing art projects and productions that are broadly participatory and civically oriented. Public murals, community theater groups, local chorales and the like promise to accomplish a wide array of worthwhile goals – from honoring community experiences, to providing civically valuable opportunities for cultural participation, to offering citizens an entertaining alternative to television. We would like to see more productions like Seattle's "Dance This," which brings together youth dance troupes from a variety of cultures – Chinese, Mexican, African, among others – to immerse residents in diverse styles of expression. Community arts projects and public arts participation also promise a way out of the destructive debate over whether public money should support the arts, and, if so, what kind of art is appropriate, and who decides? Because of the role of arts in rebuilding social capital and communities, we foresee broader consensus on the principle that community arts projects are worthy of public support.

Recommendation 2: Create Opportunities for Collaboration Between Arts Organizations. Leaders of arts institutions are also community leaders. They can bridge constituencies in emotionally powerful ways, and thereby bridge cultures. People naturally seek out others like themselves, and often fear venturing into unknown territories – sometimes, but not always, with good reason. Young inner-city residents and comfortable middle-aged citizens alike often do not feel comfortable or welcome outside their respective environs, nor do they see any point in finding out if they are missing something. Similarly, people of all stripes who have never

meaningfully experienced the arts often do not feel comfortable or welcome in *cultural* environs, nor do *they* want to learn if they are missing something. Witness, for example, the paucity of people under 30 at the symphony.

Good leaders challenge people to move beyond their comfort zone, and good leaders make these people glad they did. In Boston, for example, the Museum of the National Center for African-American Artists had a "Fish Fry" in which diverse groups of black Americans (Haitians, Jamaicans, Cape Verdeans, Brazilians, and African Americans) built 20-foot-long fish and then paraded them or launched them by boat in elaborate processions to the New England Aquarium. We wholeheartedly embrace efforts by arts institutions to reach out to one another, to discover their common goals of enlarging cultural understanding, and to establish pathways for their constituencies to follow.

We embrace programs that link institutions with very different audiences, bringing, for example, the well-heeled together with the truly disadvantaged, Hispanics with Hmong, Buddhists with B'Hai and Baptists. We embrace programs that link professional theatrical troupes with communities that have never staged a play. We challenge leaders, in the arts and in other civic institutions, to reach out to leaders unlike themselves to use art as a mode of spanning community divides, and in the process to find ways to make the arts accessible financially and culturally. Fostering greater collaboration across arts organizations also furthers our "C2C" principle, in which citizens help citizens without expert intermediaries.

Recommendation 3: Make Civic Dialogue Integral to Artistic Productions. We join others, including the advocacy group Americans for the Arts, in calling for a revival of the old practice of using artistic productions to critique and improve community and democracy. We believe that the arts provide a safe space for discussion of difficult issues, and that the act of creating and performing together breaks down the walls that block democratic discourse from occurring. We endorse efforts such as Swamp Gravy, a Georgia- and Chicago-based theater company whose works explore racial and cultural divisions in the South, and the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, which, among other subjects, has explored the impact of economic dislocations in the Northeast. We also support the continued proliferation of poetry slams, which are part cultural critique and part performance art and are especially popular with young people from diverse cultural backgrounds. These efforts, and scores more like them, allow for diverse groups of people to gather together and explore what it means to be a citizen.

Recommendation 4: Incorporate the Arts into Social Problem Solving. The arts are intrinsically worthwhile, but they also have instrumental uses. We call on government and non-profit leaders to find creative ways to tap artists as partners in educational, social, and faith-based programs. We believe that programs to lift people up must raise their spirits and spark their imagination. The power of the arts to do so has been evident for decades. Witness the runaway success of the Jesse White Tumblers, a Chicago acrobatics group that recruits youths from the city's roughest housing projects and provides them with a positive alternative to gangs.[17] Or witness the Arts-in-Corrections program, which uses writing and music among inmates to lessen the social isolation

[17] Steve Neal, "Jesse White has launched achievers for 40 years," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 16 July 1999, p. 8.

within jails, and also reduces recidivism when the inmates get out. [18] Recently, the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities profiled more than 200 extracurricular cultural programs – from a Cambodian dance troupe in Massachusetts to a poetry league in Washington, D.C. – that are improving the lives and skills of at-risk kids in neighborhoods all over the country (see www.cominguptaller.org).

We recognize that artists need never leave the studio or stage to contribute to society, and we do not want to force artists to be social workers, teachers, community organizers, or public servants. However, we know that artists possess an invaluable repertoire of skills and sensibilities that can breathe life into tired programs. Artists' touches could increase both the fun and the effectiveness of everything from English-as-a-second-language classes, to health-and-healing programs for hospital patients, to economic development projects in depressed areas.

Recommendation 5: Connect Arts to Community Service. We call on cultural institutions and unincorporated groups of artists to find innovative ways to support the community-building work of other organizations. For example, members of quilting bees often stitch for local charities and organizations. In San Francisco, a quilting bee that meets for free at a police station repaid the hospitality by stitching quilts to be carried in squad cars and used to comfort traumatized children.[19] Such efforts connect quilters to their communities, imbue their product with deeper meaning, and allow art to better the human condition.

Concluding Thoughts

In an exploration of how arts projects can animate democracy, Americans for the Arts observed that art is a "powerful force for illuminating civic experience" through its ability "to create indelible images, to express difficult ideas through metaphor, and to communicate beyond the limits of language."[20] We agree. Sadly, in an age of 500-channel television and individualized entertainment, America has begun to forget the civic value of community arts. Our forebears knew well how watching together and performing together strengthened social bonds. America needs to commit itself to creating new and exciting opportunities for shared cultural experiences – opportunities compelling enough to lure us away from "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire." We need to find the modern-day equivalent of the opera house or the dance hall: an entertainment venue that doubles as a community space. Cultural institutions are eagerly reinventing themselves, and all of us need to join them in finding new and innovative roles for the arts to play in building social capital.

[18] Durland (1997), 251-256.
[19] Leah Fletcher, *The Social Fabric: How Quilting Groups Are Rebuilding Community in Contemporary America* (Honors Thesis, Harvard College, March 2000).
[20] Barbara Schaffer Bacon, Cheryl Yuen, and Pam Korza, *Animating Democracy: The Artistic Imagination as a Force in Civic Dialogue*. Report to the Ford Foundation. (Washington, D.C.: Americans for the Arts, 1999).

TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

Liz Lerman Dance Exchange

Liz Lerman likes to tell about a Dance Exchange residency at the Portsmouth Shipyard in New Hampshire. One evening, she and some of the dance company members met with a group of Navy wives, and one of them described how she had kept her submariner husband up to date on her pregnancy. "Once a month," she said, "I would measure my belly with a length of string and send it to him. He taped the strings up on the inside of his locker, and one day a buddy of his saw them hanging there and asked about them. 'That,' said my husband, 'is my baby.'" The Dance Exchange took that story, as well as the movements the woman had made when she told it, and used them in a dance piece presented on the shipyard grounds. After the performance a man came up and told Lerman, "I've been a welder on the these ships for years, but until I saw your dance about the Navy dad and the strings that got longer and longer, I was never able to imagine the lives of the people on the boats we built. Now I can."

Lerman reflected on how the welder's response to the dance was one in a long series of social capital connections: A man on a submarine had responded to his friend's display of the strings; his wife related that to the dancers who performed it; and now a welder returned to his job with a new awareness of and connection to his work.

Lately, Lerman has been pondering the nature of connections and the meaning of community. "The company was in a nursing home in Portland, Oregon," she says. "Our sponsor, with some funding from an HMO, had put us into fourteen nursing homes in one week. At most of them, we did a workshop where we get people to talk a little about their lives and then we made up a little dance for us all to do, based on the stories, and on what movement the people could manage. In situations like that, we like to provide a chance for people to express their creativity, if only briefly. They participate in a workshop where they can use their imagination in new ways, get to know themselves a little better, or see the person who has been eating at the same table with them five nights a week for five years in a different way. We had a good session. We were leaving, at the door, when the director of the nursing home came running up to me, very excited. 'I just heard that Shirley talked! It's a miracle!' she said. She said that one of the old women who had participated in our story-dance exercise had spoken that night for the first time in seven years."

"I guess it was a miracle," says Lerman, "but, as I mused about it later, I realized that we see similar transformations all the time. So that incident raised a lot of questions. Did that event have any lasting meaning for that woman? For the other people who live there? For the staff at the home? For us? Did what we do make a difference in their community? Or in ours? We probably helped create some sort of temporary community that evening. Or, maybe, everybody yearns so much for community that we mistake connection for community. Or is it still true that community means commitment and interaction over the long haul? If so, the life of the Dance Exchange, as a continuously evolving community, *is* the story rather than the people with whom we've had such good connections over the last twenty-five years."

Contact: http://www.danceexchange.org 301-270-6700

WHITESBURG, KENTUCKY

Roadside Theater

"It was hard to believe that somebody would want to hear my story, to hear about domestic violence that happened to me. But I realized it's not just my story either, because there are so many women with the same problem." So says Nancy Brock, a workshop participant at the HOPE House Women's Shelter in rural southwest Virginia. In this area, central Appalachia, domestic violence is one legacy of a hundred years of a boom and bust coal economy and a legal system that once viewed women and children as the property of a patrician. In 1998, in just one of the sparsely populated counties served by HOPE House, there were 595 domestic violence calls to the Sheriff's Office in an eight month period - an average of more than two per day.

In 1998, the Roadside Theater conducted a residency at HOPE House, and created a play from the stories it collected there. Roadside, located across the state line from HOPE House in Whitesburg, KY, is a nationally and internationally recognized theatre company now in its twenty-fifth year.

Joy Smith-Briggs, Executive Director of HOPE House, says "I wanted to do the project because I saw the potential for getting the message out about domestic violence, using the stories of the women who have lived through it, or not survived it. And I wanted to empower the women by letting them tell their stories in a safe atmosphere. But when we read the first draft of the play called *Voices from the Battlefield* – it didn't sound significant. These were just the stories we hear every day. We didn't realize what we had created. And then we heard the audiences' reactions and sat in the story circles after the performances."

"Story circles" are an integral approach for Roadside in working with its mostly poor and working-class constituents. Small groups of people, guided by a facilitator, tell their stories to each other, and the stories are used both as a playmaking tool and as a way of helping communities identify and discuss a variety of issues that concern them.

Says Smith-Briggs: "We saw that the play's audiences came to understand this violence as a real problem, and a complex one, and they looked at it with a greater empathy and understanding. In a story circle, which we did after each performance of the play, you need to tell your story as well as listen to others. A story circle isn't rocket science, you know. If people listen to each other, they learn."

Dudley Cocke, Roadside Theater's Director, remembers in particular two comments from story circle participants after they saw *Voices from the Battlefield*:

A police officer said, "My father was very violent, and beat my mother regularly. She left my father and me when I was four years old. Now I see that she knew that he would kill her. If she would have taken me, he would have hunted us down. Either way, I would have lost her."

A judge said, "I've often considered these women's complaints trivial. I didn't how understand how violence starts, and how it escalates. I'll have to more careful weeding out the trivial from the substantial."

Contact: www.appalshop.org/rst 606-633-0108

CLEVELAND, OHIO

The Cleveland Museum of Art

The institution and many of the people it wanted to reach had little stories they told themselves about each other.

"They don't live far away, and admission is free. They must just prefer to watch TV."
"We're not welcome there, and, besides,
who wants to put on a suit and tie to go look at some paintings?"
"You'd think they'd encourage their kids to come."
"Children aren't allowed in a place like that."
"This exhibit is about their culture, and we put posters all over their community.
Why aren't they here?"
"They look down on you if you don't have a college degree in art."

The Cleveland Museum of Art wanted to be more involved with the whole Greater Cleveland community; many people in the area knew about the Museum, but had never been there. Then, in 1996, the Museum began a three-year initiative, funded by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, called *Convening The Community.* But how do you convene people you don't know?

"Well," says Nancy McAfee, the Museum's Manager of Outreach and Community Development, "you meet people and you get to know each other a little. We were interested in people from neighborhoods, not zip codes; interested in individuals, not numbers. We wanted to tackle communities, not ethnicities. So I just started to talk to people, people in lots of different neighborhoods and towns. I'd start with somebody I knew, and [move] out to people they knew, and to…people they knew. I went out and met more than one hundred people – librarians, ministers, politicians, social service providers, neighborhood activists – and I'd ask them 'tell me about your community, what kind of life do people seem to want, how do they use their leisure time?' We ended up with about 25 people who each [knew] their community as well as [had] some kind of authority and some kind of social or personal power. Then we asked them to be on a Community Advisory Council. This Council now informs almost everything we do. They help us design the labels for the art, they helped us re-design the map and guide to the galleries. Without their pushing we actually would probably not have had Spanish language labels and audio tours for the Diego Rivera exhibit. We began to see them as intelligent and sensitive colleagues and they began to see the Museum as another organization, like the church or the PTA, with goals, standards, obligations, and moral and legal commitments. In other words, we were much more a part of each other's life understanding.

"Everybody's eyes have opened a bit to what a museum can be. We made an informal video introduction to the Museum, hosted by the then Manager of the Cleveland Indians, Mike Hargrove (and, in the process, I became a rabid baseball fan). Our staff that meets visitors has become more open and understanding of how to treat people. Many more people of many different kinds have come to the Museum. We are seen in a different light in town. The Transit Agency asked our advice about how a new line might run up into our area. A local school asked us to help out with an after-school program. I overheard someone tell a friend that another cultural institution 'only cares about the elite, but that Museum – it's wide open.' "

Contact: www.clevelandart.org 216-421-7340

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

The Freestyle Union

The Freestyle Union, begun in Washington DC, is primarily a product of the will and energy of founding Director Toni Blackman. “Freestyle Union,” she says, “was an oral jam session that became a collective. Four people getting together for improvisational rap and poetry quickly turned into eighty participants. We are now an emerging artist development organization for rappers.”

Freestyle’s chief development tool is the Cipher Workshop. “A cipher,” says Ms. Blackman, “is a circle, the cipher is the circle of unity in the hip-hop culture to which we belong. Hip-hop as an art culture includes dancing (popping, locking, and breaking); graffiti and other visual art; d.j.’ing (a disc jockey functions both as composer and musician); beat boxing (making music with your mouth); and rapping (which is what Freestyle Union is about). But we are not really trying to develop rappers, we are aiming at the development of the committed artist, a writer and ‘ultimate performer’, and that is separate from commercial rapping.” In much of her community, says Blackman, “people do not talk about a concept of ‘community service’, because if you’re involved in hip-hop culture, the implication is that you work to improve the world. I tell Freestyle's young people that that is cool. There are hip cats out there doing this kind of work. But they don't know how to do outreach; most of their outreach has been toward keeping their heads above water. They don't know that helping other people helps themselves. There aren't enough examples of people who look and talk like them doing outreach. But, when they see it! So here I have this guy who's been in jail three times and he's carefully helping a seven year old redo a poem: that's where the message comes from. So most of our performances are with the kids and the young people and are part of community events. For me, it’s taking that young person's natural tendency to rebel, and using it, so that it becomes hip to care.”

Now relocated to Brooklyn, NY, Freestyle Union still sees its purpose as “using oral improvisation as the basis for the human and creative development of emerging artists.” “In order to get art going,” says Blackman, “you need to focus outside yourself. Our basic ingredients still include the analysis of proverbs and the debate of current events.” New to the Brooklyn phase of Freestyle’s operation is a series of intense workshops on artist development. “Because so many rappers come out of the community and/or see only the commercial side of hip-hop, they need to be able to view themselves as artists in order to enhance their performance” says Blackman. The new workshops will continue to emphasize writing, speaking, and performance, but will also add such topics as: ego management; holistic health care; the study of hip-hop history, culture, and values; and the rapper’s role as storyteller and historian – a *griot* for the community.

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COLQUITT, GEORGIA

Swamp Gravy

"The dish we call swamp gravy is a kind of gumbo sometimes served at fish fries. It's making nourishment out of whatever you have at hand. You use fish drippings, and hot peppers, vegetables, fish pieces, shrimp, whatever, put it together, stir it up, and maybe add some hush puppies," says Karen Kimbrel, Swamp Gravy's Executive Director. The play called Swamp Gravy, now in its tenth year, is what its artistic creator, Richard Alan Geer, calls "an experiment in a form of community performance—oral-history based, large-scale, professionally produced amateur theater" which celebrates the lives and stories of the residents, black and white, of Colquitt and Miller County, Georgia.

The play is presented for four three-performance weeks each Fall and Spring, and tours elsewhere, with its one hundred cast members, five to seven times a year. But, even more notably, the play and what Kimbrel calls its "transforming effects" have created a wide variety of social interactions and institutions, all still under the umbrella of the Colquitt/Miller Arts Council, which sponsors Swamp Gravy.

The Arts Council now owns four buildings and is developing a fifth. A 15,000-square-foot converted cotton warehouse contains the theatre, a Museum of Southern Cultures, and "a community area where folks can sit and visit, or have meetings and weddings." An arts and education building rents space to the Board of Education and sponsors adult education seminars and classes offered by the alternative school and the community college. A third building is for the Arts Council's Youth Program (for Grades 9-12) and for the activities of the New Vision Coalition , a program for African-American children in Grades K through 8, founded by two black cast members of Swamp Gravy "with the goal of keeping kids in school and away from drugs and alcohol." A fourth building, a market building on the square in the center of town, contains four low-income apartments and a crafts, folk art, and antique mall. In development is a fifth building, dubbed the New Life Learning Center, which is "designed as a training center for people on public assistance. We will have programs in African-American quilt-making, traditional pottery and basket-making, and Hospitality—skills such as waiting, hosting, cleaning, and reception. Tourism is Georgia's number two industry, and besides, the Arts Council also owns a big bed and breakfast in town."

"All these projects," continues Kimbrel, "came out of—and continue to be nourished by—our coming together as a community to make Swamp Gravy. We have all these things as part of our mission. We're in the ninth poorest congressional district in the US; our poverty is obscene. As an organization, we are a little odd. Other arts councils sometimes look a little distressed when I describe our activities. And, on the other side, I have to say that I was a drop-out from the Georgia Economic Development Academy. They invited me up there, but all I could write on my papers was 'think outside the box.' Arts projects bring us together; then we can make other things to combat racism and social injustice."

Contact: www.swampgravy.com 912-758-5450

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

The United States of America, the world's oldest and most esteemed democracy, is experiencing serious and pervasive problems in its politics and government. For the last half-century, Americans have become more disgusted with elected officials, less trusting of political institutions, and increasingly indifferent toward democratic participation. This disaffection is particularly surprising given that the economy is booming, educational levels are high and rising, and the nation has enjoyed nearly uninterrupted peace for more than a quarter century.

Despite the harmony and prosperity, levels of civic engagement and trust in government are at post-War lows. Voting, attending public meetings, writing letters to the editor, contacting elected representatives, paying attention to current affairs, working on campaigns, going to protests or rallies – all of these activities, upon which successful democracy depends, have dropped precipitously over the past two generations. Large numbers of citizens believe that politicians lie and pander to suit their own ambitions, that rich "special interests" get their way at the expense of everyday working families, that partisan elected officials refuse to work together or lead on important matters, and that government is too big and remote to solve problems. Meanwhile, serious discussion of the big issues – race relations, the gap between the rich and poor, the health-insurance crisis, even declining civic participation itself – seems to have gotten lost in the cacophony of partisan sniping and interest-group alarmism.

Whether wholly or only partly true, these perceptions are widespread, reflected in a decade's worth of book titles from some of the nation's leading political commentators – book titles such as *Democracy's Discontent*, *Demosclerosis*, *Why Americans Hate Politics*, *The End of Politics*, *Why Americans Don't Vote*, *The Corruption of American Politics*, and *Democracy Derailed*, to name just a few.

And yet, for all their distance and disenchantment, Americans are not ready to walk away for good. They are nearly unanimous in believing that democracy is the best form of government, even if it does need a tune-up at the hands of a good civic mechanic. And recent experience shows that Americans eagerly respond to straight-talking, energetic, non-conventional leaders with new ideas for making democracy work again. For example:

- In 1992, to the shock of political pundits, nearly 20 million voters supported the third-party candidacy of the iconoclastic Texas billionaire Ross Perot after he used television infomercials (replete with his now-famous graphs and charts) to call attention to issues, such as the then-staggering budget deficit, that the major party candidates were keeping off the agenda.

- In 1998, a no-nonsense former professional wrestler named Jesse Ventura stunned the political world by capturing the Minnesota governorship, the highest office ever won by a Reform Party candidate. With his charisma and bare-knuckled populist appeals – one of his television ads had a Jesse Ventura action figure battling "Special Interest Man" – the political novice managed to excite young people and non-voters, who gave him the margin of victory over two respected major party candidates.

- In the 2000 presidential primaries, the Republican John McCain galvanized disaffected Americans, including many young people, with his "Straight Talk Express" bus campaign to clean up politics. Despite having virtually no backing from his own party, Senator McCain defeated the presumptive nominee in several key primary states and dramatized Americans' deep longing for a new way of politics.

- Even the veteran consumer activist Ralph Nader, who is not distinguished either by novelty or charisma, has developed a substantial following with his Green Party calls to redress the imbalance between the economically powerful interests, on the one hand, and the public interest, on the other.

The lesson is clear. Whether from the right, the center, or the left, appeals to reform and reinvigorate democracy are not falling on deaf ears. People are listening for answers.

As reform-minded leaders have noted, we cannot fix America's civic malaise without transforming the way politicians politick and way government governs. There is a role both on the "input" (politics) side and on the "output" (government) side for increasing civic engagement and social capital. There is much work to be done.

Politics & Political Participation at New Lows

Modern politics – by which we mean the election of representatives and the debates over how to use government to solve social problems – seems increasingly polarized, nasty, and undemocratic. In recent years, Congress, once known for its bipartisan comity and ability to reach consensus, has had to hold civility camps so members can get basic lessons in how to get along. The political scientists Benjamin Ginsberg and Martin Shefter have wisely observed that political elites no longer seek to exert influence the democratic way – by mobilizing citizens – but instead seek to win by smearing and investigating and prosecuting the opponent. In this "politics by other means," the average citizen becomes an irrelevant bystander as leaders wage nasty wars through distant institutions – the courts, Congressional committees, the big Washington bureaucracies, the national media, and so forth. It is no wonder citizens tune out.

What is more, modern political campaigns often seek to depress participation, rather than increase it. The method of choice: attack ads on television and radio designed to alienate the opponent's voters. While these candidates often win by driving voters away, our society pays a hefty price. When candidates do try to mobilize citizens, the campaigns usually target the most likely voters: people who are educated, married-with-children, white, well-off, and middle-aged or older. These are the folks toward whom countless polls, focus groups, television ads, direct-mail appeals, and campaign stops are oriented. The millions of other Americans – many of them young people, singles, non-whites who might vote if somebody asked or truly cared – are simply written off. In the misguided world of modern politics, voter apathy is not an urgent, *unanticipated* problem, but rather the *intended* consequence of campaigners' cynical choices.

The campaign finance system is a big part of the problem. Changes in the technology of campaigning have placed new demands on candidates either to have or to raise lots and lots of money. Not surprisingly, a system that is heavily reliant on major contributions is tilted toward

individuals and organizations that can give big. Access to money plays a key role in what kinds of candidates run and what kinds of candidates win. Indeed, the nonpartisan National Voting Rights Institute has labeled our candidate-selection system the "wealth primary" because it is nearly impossible for qualified candidates of middling means to mount a competitive campaign. The electoral system's excessive reliance on financial capital also determines what kinds of interests get heard, and what kinds of policies get passed. Seeing politics as hopelessly skewed toward the well-off and the organized, middle America has come to see individual acts of political participation as pointless. And so, a vicious circle emerges. As money appears to control politics more and more, fewer people seek to influence politics by voting or contacting their legislators, which in turn amplifies the influence of those who give money.

For that reason, the system of campaign finance, perhaps more than any other facet of government, is most in need of radical repair. Common Cause reports that, in the first 18 months of the 2000 Presidential campaign season, the two major parties used legal loopholes to raise a staggering $256-million in "soft money" contributions from corporations, political action committees, and individuals to promote candidates' campaigns. That figure represents an astonishing 82% increase over the soft money contributions raised during the comparable period of the 1996 campaign, leading Common Cause President Scott Harshbarger to observe that, "While average citizens sit at home, disconnected from politics, wealthy special interests will have access and influence at the national party conventions due to their huge soft money contributions."[1] Or, as political scientist Robert Putnam notes: "The bottom line in the political industry is this: financial capital—the wherewithal for mass marketing— has steadily replaced social capital—that is, grassroots citizen networks—as the coin of the realm."[2] And as long as money is in greater demand than volunteer time, politics will be biased toward the elite.

Trends in Political and Civic Participation

From attack ads to the "wealth primary" efforts to limit participation have had impressive results. One need only take a brief statistical tour of the past half-century to see how far we have sunk. In the late 1950s, a landmark study of political participation in five democracies found America's to be the quintessential "civic culture" probably unparalleled anywhere else in the world.[3] While the United States still stands out by international standards both for its opportunities to participate and for the willingness of everyday citizens to do so, the nation is at a post-World War II civic nadir. By virtually every measure of political participation, Americans today lag far behind their forebears.

That general statement itself contains two even more ominous facts. First, the participation deficit is most pronounced among young and middle-aged citizens. Second, the forms of participation that have declined the most are collective in nature.[4] That is, forms of political participation most

[1] Common Cause, "National Parties Raise Record $256 Million In Soft Money During First 18 Months Of 1999-2000 Election Cycle" (at http://www.commoncause.org/publications/july00/072500.htm).
[2] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), pp. 39-40.
[3] Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963).
[4] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, section II.

conducive to building social capital have withered faster than those that contribute *less* to norms and networks of trust, reciprocity, and the public good. We summarize some of the facts.

Voting. In 1996, with three viable candidates in the race, fewer than half of all voting-age Americans decided who would lead the nation into the next millennium. The turnout in the 1996 Presidential election represented a decline of nearly 14 percentage points from the 1960 election. Participation in off-year Congressional and local elections has declined by roughly the same proportion. In sum, out of every 100 voters who went to the polls in 1960, only 75 do so today.[5] The decline is especially puzzling given that, since the 1960s, barriers to voting have been razed and factors associated with higher voting rates, such as college education and wealth, have become more widespread. An analysis by political scientists Warren E. Miller and J. Merrill Shanks[6] found that nearly all the decline in voting is attributable to generational replacement. Simply put, the young adults of today do not vote in anywhere near the same numbers as the young adults of yesteryear.

Political Attention. Survey data going back to 1974 has tracked a steady decline in Americans' interest in politics and current affairs.[7] Cutting through the natural ebbs and flows that correspond to news events, the fraction of Americans who care about public affairs has dropped by roughly 20% over the past 25 years. As with voting, the decline in attention to public affairs is largely generational and likely linked to the parallel decline in newspaper readership.

Political Expression. Reflecting this general psychic disengagement, Americans are considerably less likely to render their opinions on important matters of the day. There has been a decline of more than 20% in the fraction of Americans who write their member of Congress or Senator in any given year, and a similar decline in the fraction of Americans who sign petitions. There has been a smaller but still marked drop in the propensity to write letters to the editor or newspaper articles.

Some political theorists claim that increasing the *quantity* of political expression, whether voting or speaking out, would not aid our democracy. Their argument dates to Aristotle's time, when governance was considered the rightful province of a small group of especially knowledgeable and virtuous people. While we agree that knowledge and virtue are important foundations for self-governance, we nonetheless believe pragmatically that more expression is better, irrespective of whether we become more virtuous individuals first. The decline in voter turnout and other forms of political communication is a problem precisely because it leads to confusion over what the American people want. If voters do not register their preferences, those elected cannot claim a "mandate" to do the people's bidding – whether it be expanding the government safety net or reducing government regulation. If we don't speak, they can't lead.

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[5] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp. 31-32.
[6] Warren E. Miller and J. Merrill Shanks, *The New American Voter* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 69.
[7] Roper Social and Political Trends surveys, 1973-1998 ("Have you recently been taking a good deal of interest in current events and what's happening in the world today, some interest, or not very much interest?"); and DDB Needham Life Style data, 1975-1999 ("I am interested in politics"; agree/disagree).

These indicators of civic health – voting, speaking out, paying attention – are largely individual pursuits, which don't require interaction with other citizens. The declines are even starker when we look at the forms of participation that depend on regular interaction with others.

Campaign Work. The fraction of Americans who volunteer for a political party – never high to begin with – has dropped by more than half since the early 1970s. This has accompanied, and may ironically be the product of, the growing wealth and professionalization of the major political parties. Where once the parties relied on grassroots volunteers and face-to-face persuasion to recruit locals to the party cause, the Democrats and Republicans now rely primarily on "air war" strategies – television advertisements, public opinion polling, mass mailings to people whose names and addresses are purchased from "list brokers," and phone banks staffed by professional solicitors. The political scientist John Aldrich aptly describes today's parties as service bureaus for free-lancing candidates, rather than as voluntary associations of like-minded individuals working to advance their policy interests.[8]

The decline in campaign involvement has been fueled at least in part by changes in the ways parties attempt to communicate with would-be supporters.[9] The decline is significant across generational cohorts, suggesting that the explanation lies at least in part with the political system. But it is also true that the decline in party involvement has been far more pronounced among younger than older age groups. For example, seniors aged 60 and above were 36% less likely to participate in the late 1990s relative to the early 1970s, but the comparable figure for people 18-29 was fully 64%.[10] The difference in drop-off rates suggests that a generational factor may be at work. The story is familiar: The long civic generation that came of age during the Depression and second World War is far more inclined to participate in politics than are the generations that followed. If the younger generations are less inclined to take the initiative to get involved, this makes it all the more imperative that political institutions find ways to reach and persuade them.

Attendance at Political Events. Americans have become less likely to express their collective will or to deliberate about civic affairs. The fraction of people who attended a political rally or speech has fallen by more than a third, as has the fraction of citizens who attended a public meeting at which town or school affairs were discussed. Likewise, membership in good-government groups and service on local committees has dropped significantly since the early 1970s. Again, these trends are most pronounced among younger generations.

To summarize: American politics has become shriller, more craven, and more elite-oriented. Millions of middle Americans, understandably, have tuned out. The decline in participation is troublesome for the simple reason that civic engagement is a necessary condition for wise, responsible, and effective government. Social capital makes democracy work. Not surprisingly, then, government performance seems to be sagging.

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[8] John H. Aldrich, *Why Parties?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[9] Examining data from the 1960s through the 1980s, political scientists Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen estimate that a drop in party recruitment efforts explains more than half the drop in voting and in campaign work.

[10] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

A Loss of Faith in Government

Government, the "output" side of democracy, is composed of the institutions that are supposed to carry out our collective wishes. For as long as America has been a republic, there have been lively debates at all levels of society over whether government harms or helps community. Some conservative critics have argued that government can, and routinely does, undermine patterns of mutual assistance and reciprocity. Thus, they maintain, less government would stimulate more civic-mindedness and stronger social bonds. Liberal commentators, conversely, have argued that government powerfully spurs voluntary activity, both by helping to spark and sustain associations and by creating the background conditions, such as health and income security, that allow individuals the luxury of contributing to the wider society.

There is truth to both the liberal and conservative positions. We agree that government, with its vast resources and coercive powers, at times can threaten social capital. The 1950s "slum clearing" projects are a regrettable memorial to the damage that government can inflict on our stocks of social capital. On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that government provides real incentives for social capital formation: examples range from the government's funding of the Cooperative Extension Service (which spawned 4-H clubs and spurred rural social capital building) to the government's support for national and community service programs nationwide. Because government has the potential both to deplete and to build our stock of social capital, the challenge for government in this new century is to increase the ratio of building to depleting.

Americans have always been ambivalent about their government. On the one hand, we tend to agree with Winston Churchill's famous quip "democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."[11] That is, we express high levels of confidence in our *system* of government. And we are surprisingly satisfied with specific components of the system. The vast majority of us like our member of Congress and solid majorities express confidence in the military and the police.[12] As long as the economy is strong, we usually approve of our President. What's more, in a recent "customer satisfaction" survey, Americans gave high ratings to the service they received from scores of government offices, ranging from the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) food program to the Social Security Administration to the National Park Service. Indeed, the headline-grabbing study found that customer satisfaction with the federal government was nearly as high as with the private sector.[13]

On the other hand, generalized trust in government has plunged to previously unimaginable lows. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, about three-quarters of Americans agreed that you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right always or most of the time, but by the 1990s, that fraction had dropped to less than a third.[14] The fraction agreeing that "quite a few officials are

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[11] James C. Humes, ed., *The Wit and Wisdom of Winston Churchill* (New York: Harper & Row, 1995).
[12] Gallup Organization polls.
[13] "American Customer Satisfaction Index, 1999," National Quality Research Center of the University of Michigan Business School, ASQ/American Society for Quality, and Arthur Andersen. (Summary results available at http://www.bus.umich.edu/research/nqrc/govt-key.html)
[14] American National Election Studies.

crooked" increased from about 25% in the late 1950s to about 45% in the mid-1990s.[15] The fraction of Americans who have confidence in Congress has never exceeded 41% since 1975, and the confidence score since 1991 has averaged 22%, irrespective of which party was in control.[16] While trust in government ebbs and flows with economic conditions, after the mid-1980s government trust continued to fall amid a soaring economy, and even our recent unprecedented boom has failed to reverse the decline of the previous two decades.

Scholars have offered various explanations. One set of explanations centers on an increasingly shrill and unyielding politics dominated by what the political scientist Morris Fiorina calls "extreme voices" and what the political journalist E.J. Dionne Jr. refers to as "a series of false choices" that preclude consensus.[17] Naturally, domination by extremists leads to a vicious circle, in which the louder they get, the more the "moderate middle" drops out, thereby producing an even more extreme politics that is ever more resistant to consensus building. A related explanation centers on the distancing of candidates from the electorate through polling, televised appeals, and direct mail, and the concomitant alienation of the citizenry from elected officials. As the political scientist Hugh Heclo has observed, politics has become a "permanent campaign" in which the public feels cynically manipulated by spin-masters, talked *at* rather than *with*.[18] A third explanation is the "expectations gap": As government tackles ever-more-complex social problems, it has created public expectations that it cannot conceivably meet.[19] Fourth, as good-government reforms have opened up policy making to public view and unleashed a press ever more aggressive in its watchdog role, the American people for the first time have laid eyes on the necessarily messy inner-workings of their democracy.[20] It is no wonder we are appalled.

We disagree with those critics who state that growing distrust of government and politics is not worrisome. They argue that democracy depends on healthy skepticism and note that, according to some accounts, distrusters participate almost as much as trusters. We are sympathetic to these points. However, as people interested in bolstering civic life, we believe that government distrust is a problem in two ways. First, if everyday citizens are distanced and alienated from their elected leaders, leaders have trouble mobilizing people for courageous acts of public good. Some of the nation's greatest triumphs – from the near elimination of elderly poverty, to the victory over Nazi fascism, to the huge strides toward ending racial discrimination – have involved a partnership between an optimistic, mobilized public and trusted, visionary leaders. Second, it is difficult to

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[15] American National Election Studies.

[16] Gallup Organization polls. Percentages refer to fraction of Americans expressing "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in Congress.

[17] Morris P. Fiorina, "Extreme Voices: A Dark Side of Civic Engagement," *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*, ed. Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), pp. 395-425. E.J. Dionne Jr. *Why Americans Hate Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Touchstone, 1991), p. 11.

[18] Hugh Heclo, "Presidential Power and Public Prestige: '…a snarly sort of politics…'" Paper prepared for the "*Presidential Power* Revisited" conference, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, June 1996.

[19] This "expectations gap" was at the root of Daniel Patrick Moynihan's assessment of the failings of the "maximum feasible participation" components of the War on Poverty. Quoting the political scientist Aaron Wildavsky, Moynihan included the following epigraph in his book *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding* (New York: Free Press, 1969): "A recipe for violence: Promise a lot; deliver a little. Lead people to believe they will be much better off, but let there be no dramatic improvement." This line is cited in Jeffrey M. Berry, Kent E. Portney, and Ken Thomson, *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1993), p. 24.

[20] For a discussion of this argument, see Morris P. Fiorina, "Extreme Voices" in Skocpol and Fiorina (1999). This view parallels the maxim that sausage and law are two things one should never see being made.

build strong, trusting relationships with one another – social capital – if we can't count on public institutions to punish people who don't play by the rules. Our willingness to pay taxes, for example, hinges largely on our assumption that others will pay as well; but that assumption depends on trusting the Internal Revenue Service to catch tax cheats. Similar logic applies to everything from reporting for jury duty to abiding by watering restrictions.

Democracy, Heal Thyself?

The question facing those of us concerned about social capital and citizen participation is this: How quickly and how effectively can we reverse the erosion of civic life? After all, American history is replete with good-government reforms that have unintentionally driven down participation, or at least cheapened it. Primary elections and ballot reforms in the Progressive Era sought to root out corruption but had the curious effect of enfeebling party machines, which had played a valuable role in getting new citizens, poor people, and blue-collar workers to the polls. Post-Watergate campaign finance reforms sought to reduce the influence of private money in politics but instead may have exacerbated the problem through attractive loopholes that "special interests" now exploit. Similarly, as the political journalist David Broder has recently argued, ballot initiatives – a Progressive era innovation aimed at increasing direct citizen control over policy making – are now "derailing democracy" by allowing millionaires and special-interest groups to take divisive issues "to the people" without giving them enough information or time to deliberate about the complex decisions that have been forced on them.

Besides noting the problem of unintended consequences, some scholars have questioned whether government can or should seek to bolster social capital. Some conservatives have argued that, if only government would back away, virtuous volunteerism would flourish. For their part, some liberals have argued that citizen groups need to keep their distance from government lest these groups be co-opted and their causes undermined. We recognize that there are powerful reasons to maintain a healthy separation between government and the non-governmental instruments of democratic participation. Excessive entanglement, whether financial or programmatic, in some cases may crowd out voluntary action or inhibit civic expression. Yet, even though the relationship between government and civil society may sometimes be tense or adversarial, we nonetheless believe that each has a role in strengthening the other. Our recommendations are designed to create synergy between governmental and non-governmental organizations to the benefit of both.

Principles for Building Social Capital Through Politics and Government

Reforming politics and government to rebuild civic America should follow three general principles. Each of these principles recognizes that democratic institutions can either bolster or weaken civil society. Which way the balance tips depends in large part on how closely the principles are followed.

Principle 1: View Government and Civil Society as Complements. There has been a lively debate over the past two decades about the proper roles of politics and government, on the one hand, and voluntary action ("civil society"), on the other. Often these two have been portrayed as locked in a zero-sum game: As one gets bigger, the other gets smaller. We believe it is erroneous to see politics/government and civil society as pure substitutes for each other, or to see public action as a choice between these two venues. Politics, the collective deliberation over how to allocate resources for the public good, may rely on social capital, but social networks and groups lack the authority that is sometimes necessary to achieve publicly desirable ends. Likewise, social capital and government are complementary. Social-capital-rich communities may accomplish more than can social-capital-poor communities, but there are certain functions (law enforcement, for example) that only government should fulfill. Government and civil society must take advantage of their respective comparative advantages and find synergy wherever possible.

Principle 2: Do No Harm. Just as doctors are obliged by the Hippocratic oath to "do no harm" so government agencies, to the fullest extent possible, should aspire to avoid actions that hurt neighborhood networks, community norms, and voluntary organizations. The City of Indianapolis is guided by such a pledge. Before devising or acting on policy proposals, city officials are asked to consider: Does the policy help citizens to know more neighbors? Does the policy strengthen family ties? Does the policy help people know more people unlike themselves? Does the policy strengthen institutions that promote family and community bonds?

Principle 3: Foster Greater Democratic Deliberation. Especially in light of technological changes that allow political communication and civic activities to take place without face-to-face contact, we are concerned that Americans are at risk of losing their ability to deliberate together, to compromise, and to reach consensus. Any efforts to reform government or politics to enhance trust and citizen participation must themselves be guided by, and emphasize, deliberative democracy.

Recommendations for Building Social Capital Through Government and Politics

We believe that government and political institutions have a role to play in rebuilding social capital. This will require transforming the incentives facing political actors – government officials, candidates, and citizens. Toward that end, we offer eight broad recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Strengthen Organizations Connecting Individuals and Government. We share the concerns of political scientists, commentators, and everyday citizens that our politics has become too fractious. We support efforts to revive local and national organizations, once prevalent in the United States, that unite people across class and identity in coalitions of

democratic deliberation and civic activity. Such organizations include state and local arms of the major political parties, federated voluntary associations such as the PTA and the Lions Clubs, neighborhood governing councils, and even temporary structures such as community meetings and civic forums.

In recent years, there is some evidence that the local political parties have begun reviving the grassroots efforts of old. We must take care to provide continuing incentives to bolster the locals' work in the field. And we must find ways to tip the balance away from capital-intensive "air war" strategies that dominate our national politics and toward the volunteer-reliant grassroots strategies that characterize election activity in early primary states such as New Hampshire.

We further endorse using public policy, whether tinkering with the tax code or changing the lobbying rules, to encourage the revival of cross-class federated voluntary organizations, which represent the moderate middle Americans who have lately been AWOL from American political activism.[21] These organizations represent an important forum for furthering our "Bridging" principle.

Finally, we wholeheartedly support the efforts of cities such as Portland, Ore., and St. Paul, Minn., to create neighborhood councils with *real* decision-making power. Government officials have long won political points by creating advisory groups and espousing neighborhood input, but too often these efforts have amounted to little more than half-hearted political gesture. Where local governments have made good-faith efforts to create neighborhood councils with real control over zoning changes, planning decisions, and financial resources, and where local governments mandate consultation with those councils, the results have been impressive. According to an important study by political scientists Jeffrey M. Berry, Kent E. Portney, and Ken Thomson, citizen participation in such neighborhood councils had a raft of good results. It enhanced the participants' sense of community, knowledge of local affairs, and tolerance toward difference; brought important issues to the fore; and redressed power imbalances that had worked to the detriment of everyday citizens.[22] Such neighborhood councils also provide forums for training leaders who otherwise would never have realized their potential for civic contributions.

Grassroots involvement can work on a national scale, as well. In Canada during the 1970s, Minister of Health Marjorie Begin secured massive health insurance reform even though the debate was just as polarized as it has been recently in the United States. Begin believed that Canadian citizens would favor health care reform if they understood the proposals and the stakes involved, and she knew that, without broad public deliberation, special interests (insurance companies, hospitals, doctors' associations, etc.) would hijack the debate. Begin secured public funds to rent halls for public meetings, hire facilitators, and notify the public about the events. The press and Parliament immediately heard from the grassroots. From the perspective of broadening civic engagement, the United States would clearly benefit by following Canada's example, regardless of what substantive policy proposals emerged from the citizen deliberations. Suppose, for example, we sought solutions to the Social Security dilemma through broad-based,

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[21] See Theda Skocpol, *The Missing Middle: Working Families and the Future of American Social Policy* (New York: Norton, 2000); and Morris P. Fiorina, "Extreme Voices" in Skocpol and Fiorina (1999).

[22] Berry, Portney, and Thomson (1993).

carefully prepared public deliberation, rather than merely "blue-ribbon" commissions of professional politicians.

A revival of mediating institutions, whether at the local, state, or national level, will mitigate the deleterious and alienating effects of modern, technology-based politicking. They also have the potential to improve the functioning of government itself. But this will only happen if government officials dare to share their power, and everyday citizens dare to care about their own civic obligations.

Recommendation 2: Reform Political Campaigns to Encourage Broader Participation. Polling, advertising, focus groups, direct mail – all of these methods of political communication are here to stay, as are the legions of professional campaign generals who deploy them. We therefore urge civic-minded politicians, and perhaps private donors, to turn these campaign practices to good use. Instead of exploiting voter psychology to keep people from participating, campaigns must dare to find methods and messages that excite people about democratic engagement. Visionary campaigners from John F. Kennedy to John McCain have shown that there is no downside to awakening dormant voters – there are only benefits.

Just as modern campaign technology is a permanent fixture of politics, so too is money. Campaigns and political parties cannot function without the bucks to pay the bills. Clearly, however, financial capital is playing far too great a role, and social capital far too small a role, in determining who gets heard. Most Americans believe that only the wealthy interests count, and that money has hopelessly corrupted and warped policy making. We therefore endorse efforts, such as those being led by the National Voting Rights Institute and Public Campaign, to limit the role of money in politics. For example, we support constitutional challenges to the "wealth primary," the system by which only those with access to big money are able to prevail in primary campaigns. We also urge all states to pass "clean elections" laws, such as those in Maine and Vermont, that provide public funds to state candidates who reject special-interest money and agree to campaign spending limits. At the national level, we advocate expanding the current public financing system, which only covers Presidential candidates, to candidates for Congress, as well. Finally, we recommend closing the legal loophole that allows unlimited "soft money" donations to political parties. We recommend that contributions to parties – both the source of the funds and the amount – be limited just as the law already limits contributions to candidates.

While not every one of us would give the same enthusiastic support to every one of these initiatives, collectively we believe that these recommendations will increase participation for three reasons. First, by reducing the influence of wealthy interests, Americans might again believe that participation is worth their while and decide to get involved as campaign volunteers and letter writers and voters. Second, by making it harder for parties to rely on a relatively small cadre of wealthy donors, these reforms will force parties to reconnect with everyday citizens by soliciting small donations. Third, by making television advertising and other costly technologies harder to afford, these reforms would, ideally, provide incentives for the parties to revive good, old-fashioned, inexpensive shoe-leather organizing.

Recommendation 3: Offer Civil Society Support without Coercion. We endorse a broad range of efforts, many already in place, that use the comparative advantages of government to strengthen

voluntary institutions. Such efforts include government agency liaisons to voluntary groups; Mayor's, Governor's and President's awards for social capital building initiatives; and Internet access to government information and decision-making bodies. We also urge that government agencies and non-profit organizations seek innovative ways to develop "civic spaces" where deliberation can occur. This might mean opening school cafeterias after hours to accommodate community meetings or building parks where dog walkers can congregate while their pets exercise. Although some liberals have criticized such inexpensive government programs as mere window dressing, we believe that "little things" can reap large returns. We believe that government can play a key role, at little cost, both in facilitating local engagement and in enlarging its scope and psychic rewards.

Recommendation 4: Broaden the Role of Citizens in Restructuring Government. Most political debate revolves around questions of government spending and regulation. Should the government provide more money for K-12 education? Subsidize prescription drugs for senior citizens? Require that all gun owners be licensed? We spend far less time mulling an equally important set of questions: How government should be constituted (i.e., highly centralized, or highly decentralized), what the responsibilities of different levels of government should be, and what processes should govern political decision-making. Because these questions receive inadequate attention, we endorse formal and regular re-evaluations of local, state, and national government structures along the lines of the charter-review commissions recently empowered to rethink the governing structures of the City and County of Los Angeles.

As happened in Los Angeles, such reviews should tackle a fundamental question: Which level of government should fulfill which functions? While some programs can be effectively provided only by the national government, as proponents of community involvement, we are concerned about the concentration of power in larger and larger entities. When policy decisions and delivery take place on a plane far above local capacities, then ordinary people tune out, figuring they can't make a difference. From the vantage point of increasing social capital, smaller is better than larger, and local is better than national. To the extent possible given the imperatives of equal treatment and program effectiveness, governmental decision-making authority should be pushed downward so that citizens believe they can have an influence over the policies that affect their lives.

Recommendation 5: Rein in Suburban Sprawl. Increasingly, government and civic leaders are recognizing that the pace and design of new construction pose a threat to the quality of community life. Therefore, more state governments should follow the lead of Maryland and Georgia by devising comprehensive "smart growth" strategies. And more local governments should follow the lead of Memphis and surrounding Shelby County, Tenn., to enact regional planning principles and procedures. These and other pioneering development strategies are wide ranging, but most have several features in common: restoring existing buildings rather than constructing new ones ever farther away; coordinating zoning and development decisions across city and county boundaries; and reducing traffic flows and commuting times. As the Partnership for Livable Communities has observed, "achieving a regional identity depends upon the combined efforts of three once-disparate sectors of society: business, the government, and nonprofits." Although the "new regionalism" requires collaboration, only government has the

authority to steer development in such a way that encourages casual interactions among pedestrians and stronger neighborhood cohesion.

Recommendation 6: Develop Participatory Citizens. Government agencies and elected officials can create the background conditions that allow everyday citizens to take part in community affairs. Readily accessible childcare, mandatory civics courses in public schools, and government internship programs make civic participation easier and more habit-forming. Consistent with our "Recycling" principle, non-political community service, required by more and more schools, has been shown to create greater political awareness, and perhaps even to spur political participation in many young people. We believe it is time for political leaders to stop fearing the broadening of political participation and start encouraging it.

Recommendation 7: Enact a "Cyber Morrill Act" to create a market for community-friendly cyber-innovations. Just as government played an important role in encouraging public innovation during the Industrial Revolution, so too in today's Information Revolution public policy needs to supplement private commercial demand for technological innovation. In 1862 and 1890 Congress passed the Morrill Acts, giving the states millions of acres of federal frontier land and other federal grants, the proceeds of which were used to create institutions of higher education. Most state agricultural and engineering schools were established under the Morrill Acts. These so-called "land grant colleges" represented one of the most productive investments in American economic history, for they radically expanded both educational opportunities and locally relevant applied industrial and agricultural research and development. We propose a modern-day "Cyber Morrill Act" under which the federal government would auction off the analog broadcast spectrum (which commercial television stations are abandoning for the digital spectrum) and use the proceeds to foster community-friendly cyber-innovations.[23] Rather than direct government subsidies for R & D, we propose that these funds be distributed to local governments and civic associations for the purchase of innovative information technology. In effect, these funds would create a market for community-friendly cyber-innovations, thus providing a market-based incentive to lure innovative researchers and information technology firms into this area.

Recommendation 8: Learn from Our Mistakes. In keeping with the "Hippocratic" and "Social Capital Impact" principles, we urge government agencies, elected officials, non-profit groups, and other public institutions to study their past activities and programs to assess how they helped or hurt community social capital. In addition, we urge government and non-profit leaders to put pending decisions under the social-capital lens. Such analyses should attempt to understand the decisions and processes that drive the creation and destruction of social capital.

Concluding Thoughts

[23] For this recommendation, we have modified an idea forwarded by Lawrence Grossman and Newton Minow, who urge that the auction proceeds be used to create "a Millennium Education Trust Fund" whose purpose would be to "enhance learning, broaden knowledge, support the arts and culture, and teach the skills that are necessary for the emerging Information Age." Their ideas are contained in "The Minow-Grossman Report: A Digital Gift to the Nation," which is part of the "Digital Promise" program sponsored by the Century Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. We are indebted to Mr. Grossman and Mr. Minow for inspiring us to think about how to use the auction proceeds.

In making our recommendations, we are cognizant of the fact that not all of them will be easy to implement successfully. Policy recommendations always have hidden costs and unanticipated consequences. Therefore, the goal becomes to craft recommendations whose benefits outweigh the costs and to anticipate as best as is humanly possible the perverse effects that might flow from well-meaning reforms.

It is an especially fruitful time for political and governmental reforms, but it is a challenging time, as well. The major challenge facing reformers stems from the lightning-fast evolution of communications technology. The Internet, a seldom-used curiosity when Bill Clinton was elected President, has become in less than a decade a powerful resource for conveying information about politics and government, and, perhaps, for deliberating and debating public issues. Already, fascinating cyber-experiments are exploring the potential of computer-mediated politics. Although their long-term impact is by no means clear, these experiments deserve broad public support.

For example, we endorse initiatives such as Grassroots.com (www.grassroots.com), which provides information about issues, including schedules of events, links to interest groups, and position statements by candidates and elected officials. We also support the League of Women Voters' DemocracyNet (www.democracynet.com), which provides state-by-state information about candidates, election dates, and voter registration. DemocracyNet's "issue grids" empower citizens and third-party candidates to raise important issues for debate, and pressure candidates to post in-depth policy. We hope that every state will follow California and Minnesota, which have pioneered the use of Web sites to convey information about state and local politics and issues. For example, the California Voter Foundation publishes an online voter guide to state candidate races and provides behind-the-scenes information on the sponsorship and financing of state ballot propositions. The foundation's Web site even broadcasts "The Proposition Song," a whimsical summary of the state's 20 ballot initiatives and referenda (www.calvoter.org). The Minnesota Electronic Democracy Project (www.e-democracy.org) provides links to candidate web sites, runs online "issues forums" in which citizens can discuss policy concerns, and sponsors online debates in which candidates for major offices respond to questions, with the answers posted on the Internet and emailed to interested citizens.

While these experiments have almost certainly made it easier to find information about issues and politicians, the Internet is by no means a panacea. Like any other innovation, it may exacerbate existing problems or create new ones. We must be aware of this potential and try to blunt any negative effects. For example, we are concerned that democracy-by-modem may deepen problems such as the disproportionate representation of the "haves" among the participating public (at least until the "digital divide" has been bridged); the loss of real deliberation and persuasion; and the tendency of like-minded people to talk exclusively among themselves. Until these problems are mitigated, the Internet should be considered a complement, not a substitute, for direct face-to-face political communication.

Americans are ready for top-to-bottom reform of their democracy. They want government they can influence and elected officials who respect them. Citizens are looking for visionary leaders who will inspire the many, not pander to the few. Fixing democracy will require that we create

new, meaningful opportunities for participation and that we give citizens reason to believe, once again, that their participation counts.

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

Kids Voting Virginia & Kids Voting USA

In a 1997 election for the Virginia legislature, the Democratic Party candidate in the Norfolk area won by only eleven votes. The newly elected delegate pointed to Kids Voting Virginia (the state chapter of Kids Voting USA) as an essential factor in his victory. A local mother had told him that "I came home late from work on election night; I was tired, and voting was the last thing on my mind. But my son said, 'Mom, you have to vote. Kids Voting says people have to vote.' So I did." And a dad told the winning candidate that he had decided not to vote, figuring that his candidate was sure to win. "But my son and daughter needed a ride to the polls so that they could vote at the Kids Voting booth. I drove them over, and while I was there, I went ahead and voted too." There are Kids Voting booths in more than 20,000 voter precincts; the program has affiliates in 38 states and its teacher-developed civic education curriculum is used for K-12 students in over 6,000 public and private schools.

Kids Voting began in 1989 when three friends, businessmen and journalists from the Phoenix area, journeyed to Costa Rica on a fishing trip. It rained – a great deal. One of their substitute activities was to take cab rides around the area where they were staying. They learned from a cab driver that voter turnout in Costa Rica regularly exceeded 80%. The cabbie volunteered that the high turnout was probably because voting is traditionally a family event—children accompany their parents to the polls and simply grow up thinking that voting is a regular and expected activity of adulthood. The three Americans returned to Arizona (where a governor had recently been impeached and voter turnout was unusually low) and began Kids Voting.

Students are introduced to issues first, then to candidates. One strategy in Virginia is to present children with a hypothetical amount of money and a list of current political issues and proposals. Students then choose how they would allocate their money. Issues and bill sponsorship are also organized geographically so that the kids begin to understand how voting and choice are affected by both economics and geography. Kids Voting booths frequently have pictures of the candidates, and the ballot initiatives are spelled out in age-appropriate language. Paula Case of Kids Voting USA reports that adults frequently check in at the Kids Booth to get a clear understanding of what's at stake.

Some of the effects of the program are apparently subliminal. Paula Case tells about a business executive, in the midst of resettling his entire operation in a new state, who went to the polls thinking that he might not vote at all. He had been too busy to examine the issues and candidates in his new locale. But once he saw the ballot, he realized that he had heard about all the candidates and the issues, and was ready to vote—he had three children in the Kids Voting program, and they had been talking politics every night at dinner.

Contact: **www.kidsvotingusa.org** **480-921-3727**

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Sustainable Seattle

"The city came up with this idea" said Ms. Jody Haug, of Seattle's Ballard neighborhood, "that it would ask the residents what *they* thought should be done to make their communities better. And the first thing people said was that 'the city *knows* what it's going to do, why doesn't it just tell us?'…but people started getting together, and we figured out what things were important. There would be a meeting, and you would expect everyone with their single issues to come out of the woodwork, and it would be a real hassle. But people really came with a feeling that they were working for the whole neighborhood – not just their lot, or their block, or their little pet project."

All of Seattle's neighborhoods, and more than 20,000 Seattle residents, have been involved in helping to implement a comprehensive plan called "Towards A Sustainable Seattle." Out of these many interactions, new relationships are formed, sometimes in very simple ways. "In our neighborhood, Wallingford," said Ms. Chris MacKenzie, "we use e-mail a lot, but we also have e-mail Buddies for those who don't have access. Last week, one of our older couples was accosted on the street and an e-mail warning went out on our network. A woman who got the message went next door to tell her e-mail Buddy, and she later told me that it was the first time they had met. Now they know each other, face to face, and that makes them both feel more safe. Now the feelings are warmer."

"In the end," says Haug, "the neighborhood got its vision together, and the city got broken down into six sectors and now you deal with your sector person at City Hall, and odds are it's someone you know, because they've been to your meetings. I remember when a person from Parks called me up and said 'Jody, we need to sit down and talk. We need to figure out how your neighborhood plan and our Parks plan can work together.' And I said to the guy, 'Give me a minute, will you? I'm picking my teeth up off the floor here.'"

Contact: **www.scn.org/sustainable** **206-622-3522**

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

The Neighborhood Revitalization Project

"I have, of course, some horror stories about the bureaucratic side of things. Lost documents. Incompetent people. [Enduring] the wrath of contractors who waited 90 to 120 days to be paid. Being assigned a limited person in…city government: the only person I've ever encountered who could communicate a blank stare over the telephone. But, would I back up three years and go through it all again? Yes, I would." So says George Roberts, a director of Homewood Studios, reflecting on their participation in the Neighborhood Revitalization Project.

In 1987, many Minneapolis neighborhoods were clearly in decline. The Mayor and City Council said "Maybe people don't care enough. Let's find a way to help our neighborhoods build their own community, and by building their community, solve their own problems." By 1990, The Neighborhood Revitalization Project was launched and the City Council dedicated $20 million each year for twenty years to fund it.

One neighborhood program funded was Homewood Studios, a community arts center. "What was especially nice about our NRP funds," says George Roberts, "was that they were voted on at a neighborhood meeting at which we presented our project. Our plan was very highly rated. We felt our community really wanted us, and so we went ahead with the project even after its costs skyrocketed. We eventually re-mortgaged our house in order to continue. Now, Homewood Studios is doing what we wanted it to do. Local professional artists have a place to work. We offer classes and other community events. We are bringing together people across ages, across genders, across cultures and races. The arts provide a common language.

"We have a large Hmong population in the neighborhood. Mostly rural people from Laos and Cambodia, many of them raised without a written language. The size of their cultural shock is enormous. Most of the Hmong adults seem hesitant, trying to hang out in their own culture. But most of the kids want to be American, and a number of them took art classes with us. We had a show of the art made by all the local kids in our classes. More Hmong adults came out for the arts show than for any other event. They tend to have trouble with English, but when they stood side by side with other parents and they all looked at their kids' art, all of a sudden people didn't have to figure out what to talk to each other about. The ice was broken. A bridge seemed possible."

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TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI

Capitalism and Community Life

"My main story is about a small-town's need to buy a big stud bull," says Vaughn Grisham, Professor of Sociology at the University of Mississippi and Director of The McLean Institute For Economic Development in Oxford. Grisham is a self-defined "shy person" who nonetheless believes so strongly in a form of community development he calls "domesticated capitalism" that he has become a nationally sought-after public speaker. Grisham sees his mission as "making real and vivid and bringing home to people the power of social capital."

At the end of the 1930's, Tupelo, Mississippi, was a dying cotton town, the home of an unknown five-year old boy named Elvis Presley, and one of the poorest counties in Mississippi. The Tupelo Story is about how a local progressive thinker and newspaper owner named George McLean started a development program that turned his town into a thriving and prosperous community that was the top dairy county in the United States for half the decade of the 1940's. "That didn't happen by trickle-down," says Grisham, "it came about through trickle-up. McLean used to say that trickle-down economics is a lot like getting urinated on. George began by convincing Tupelo businessmen to help invest in the community purchase of the costly high-quality stud bull that launched the local dairy industry. 'Listen,' said McLean to a particularly resistant hardware store owner, 'you may not like me, but you need me. You took in $6,000 last year. You'll never make more than that until you help increase the amount of money your customers make, and the average family income in this county is only $600 a year.' McLean believed that our social fabric and our economic fabric are pretty tightly interwoven. If we care enough to look for it, we can always find a thread that binds us. And, if you look at it, to say that we have an obligation to help each other out is actually a traditional American, and very pragmatic, point of view."

While he spends a good deal of time and energy telling the continuing story of Tupelo, Grisham believes that "the next break-through in social and economic development will not be in Tupelo. It will be somewhere else – and I'm looking for where that will be. But I do know that Tupelo will still be the model. Though the details will vary, community development will still hinge on several principles: community growth begins with individual growth; local people must address local problems; successful development begins with small tangible goals – pick the low-hanging fruit first; team-building (and its accompanying personal commitment) are essential; and the real task for leaders is to be social architects who build human infrastructure."

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TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI

Capitalism and Community Life

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MISSOULA, MONTANA

A Carousel for Missoula

A Missoula website says it is called "The Garden City, for its mild winters—relative to the rest of Montana—and is generally regarded by its residents as a pretty good place to live. We hike, ski, fish, run rivers and ride mountain bikes. We talk politics and shoot pool…Missoula is not a bad place to hang out."

It got better in 1991, when a local cabinet-maker named Chuck Kaparich, accompanied by a large hand-carved wooden horse, moseyed into Mayor Dan Kemmis' office and offered to build a carousel and donate it to the city if the civic government would provide the land. Dan Kemmis, sometimes referred to as "Mayor Moonbeam," agreed. Kaparich first set up a woodcarving class at the Missoula Vocational-Technical School to begin his carousel-making project. Word was out, and when registration was announced, Chuck's class filled to its forty-person capacity in fifteen minutes. People seemed drawn both to the idea of a community-built merry-go-round and to Kaparich's insistence that "we're gonna do it right—high quality and first-class." Volunteer carvers had to master making frames for mirrors and gargoyles before they could work on horses. They had to use the old traditional ways. After a while, the project moved to Kaparich's garage, and in good weather, his driveway as well. And four nights a week for three years, ten to twenty people at a time would be over at Chuck's carving, painting, talking, and, sometimes, listening as one of them read aloud to the rest. One hundred thousand volunteer hours eventually went into the project, and the completed carousel has been open to the public every day since its first ride on Labor Day, 1995. Forty-one wooden horses, and two chariots to accommodate the disabled, are mounted on an historic Herschell-Spillman frame, and move around inside a building that can be fully opened in good weather and closed up in bad.

Chuck Kaparich made four of the ponies. Four more were named and designed by the four elementary school classes that donated the most of the 1,000,000 pennies dropped into milk jugs all over west-central Montana. The additional thirty-three horses and the two chariots were named, designed, and built by adopting individuals, families, and groups for $2,500 each.

"We always say 'we' when we talk about the carousel," says Theresa Cox, an early volunteer and now the Executive Director of A Carousel For Missoula, "because almost everybody was somehow a part of it. Blue collar people, university professors, unemployed people, retired people in their seventies and eighties, kids as young as eight, doctors, lawyers, and 'granolas' (our left-over hippies). And people don't only claim a connection to the carousel, they claim ownership, and pride. The carvers still get together once a week, making animals for other carousels and for fund-raising use by non-profits; the mechanical guys still come in once a week to make sure everything is functioning. And now we are all working on a new, large, play area in Caras Park right next to the carousel. We have a plan in place for literally a thousand people to come in over six days to start and finish the playground. Yes, I would say the carousel has made a difference to Missoula."

Says Chuck Kaparich: "You could go into a town forty miles down the Clark Fork, and they might think a carousel was the dumbest thing for a community to be involved in. But, for Missoula, it makes the people here say, 'Hell, if we could build a carousel from just about scratch, think of all the other wonderful things that can happen.'"

Contact: www.carousel.com 406-549-8382

RELIGION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Houses of worship build and sustain more social capital – and social capital of more varied forms – than any other type of institution in America. Churches, synagogues, mosques, and other houses of worship provide a vibrant institutional base for civic good works and a training ground for civic entrepreneurs. Roughly speaking, nearly half of America's stock of social capital is religious or religiously affiliated, whether measured by association memberships, philanthropy, or volunteering. Houses of worship run a variety of programs for members, from self-help groups to job training courses to singles' clubs. Houses of worship also spend $15- to $20-billion each year on social services, such as food and housing for the poor and elderly. Regular religious services attenders meet many more people weekly than non-worshipers, making religious institutions a prime forum for informal social capital building.

At the same time, religious faith provides a moral foundation for civic regeneration. Faith gives meaning to community service and good will, forging a spiritual connection between individual impulses and great public issues. That is, religion helps people to internalize an orientation to the public good. Because faith has such power to transform lives, faith-based programs can enjoy success where secular programs have failed.[1]

For all that faith organizations contribute to community life, organized religion is – and always has been – controversial, especially when it spills out from behind the church doors into the public sphere. Religion can heal divisions, to be sure, but it can also exacerbate them. Religious exhortations can reduce tensions, but also increase them. The challenge is to find ways for religious leaders and institutions to fit safely and comfortably into a society made up of a virtual alphabet soup of traditions, from Atheists, Baptists, and Catholics, all the way to Salvationists, Unitarians, and Zen Buddhists.

In this chapter, we have two overarching messages. To religious institutions, we urge rededication to the project of reaching across congregations, denominations, and religions to promote a larger sense of community – that is, to rebuilding our stock of bridging social capital. If houses of worship explicitly emphasize social capital as much as they do spirituality, they will further both missions. To secular leaders, we urge you to suspend suspicion of faith-based organizations and to think creatively about ways to work with religious leaders and other people of faith in projects of civic renewal. We know from our own heated discussions that grappling with the role of religion in public life is not easy. But these discussions need to take place, and each of us – whether religious or not – needs to reexamine how faith organizations do and can create a more civil, social-capital-rich community.

[1] We use the term "faith based" to describe programs and organizations oriented toward a religious belief in a higher power. We acknowledge that non-religious organizations also may be based on faith (for example, in humanity or the sacred nature of life).

Trends in Religious Social Capital

America has long been recognized for the breadth and depth of its religious tradition. The vast majority of us believe in God, and 30-40% of us report attending religious services weekly. This is in large part because America, which lacks a state religion, has provided fertile ground for the blossoming of a great many new faiths and offshoots of existing ones. One scholar notes that America is "the most religiously fecund country" in the world.[2]

However, at the turn of the millennium, America finds itself at a spiritual crossroads. Participation in formal religious activities and organizations has been eroding for nearly 40 years. Since peaking in the late 1950s, the fraction of Americans attending religious services weekly has declined by roughly 25 percent.[3] Most of the decline occurred in the 1960s and early 1970s, and it may have reflected a "market correction" after an unusual post-War religious boom. But it is important to note that, even after any purported correction, religious attendance continued in a slow slide throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, with at least 10 percentage points of the roughly 25-point decline in religious attendance occurring during those decades. Recently, evangelical churches have begun to gain members, but these gains do not compensate for the overall decline in churchgoing. Moreover, religious philanthropy in real dollars has declined steadily since 1969.[4]

The Cultural Ascendance of Faith

In spite of the decline in traditional religious attendance – or maybe even related to it – religion and spirituality have begun to infuse our politics, our media, and our everyday discourse in a way not seen in recent generations.

In politics, the Christian Coalition enjoyed enormous success in setting the agenda for local and national Republican party committees in the 1980s and early 1990s. The 2000 Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates spent days fielding questions about how their personal religious faith affected their lives and their approach to governing. And some of the most widely debated issues of the day have a religious cast – prayer in public schools, government vouchers for parochial schools, and abortion, to name a few.

Policy makers have begun to address openly the central role of religious institutions and religious faith in healing social ills. Indeed, the 1996 welfare reform legislation contained an explicit "charitable choice" provision to give faith-based charities equal access to government funds to support programs that help families on welfare become self-sufficient. In states such as Wisconsin, lawmakers allow students to use taxpayer-financed "vouchers" to attend parochial

[2] Seymour Martin Lipset, "Comment on Luckmann," in *Social Theory for a Changing Society*, ed. Pierre Bourdieu and James S. Coleman (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991), 185-188, quotation at 187.

[3] This is from an average of five longitudinal surveys of religious attendance over the last three decades in Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000). The five data sources were Gallup Organization polls, National Election Studies, Roper Social and Political Trends surveys, the General Social Survey, and DDB Needham Life Style surveys.

[4] Ronald Sider, *Just Generosity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1999).

schools instead of public schools. In Indianapolis, former Mayor Stephen Goldsmith started the highly successful and much-studied Front Porch Alliance, in which the city government serves as a "civic switchboard" connecting houses of worship to businesses, public agencies and community groups. Through the Alliance, the city provides small grants to houses of worship that are trying to solve social problems and helps them to cut through bureaucracy to get things done, such as buying an abandoned lot to build a playground.[5]

Even the media are beginning to reflect the nation's concern with its spiritual malaise. There are an estimated 2,500 television and radio evangelists in the United States, and they raise over $3 billion annually.[6] In addition, religion has made inroads on the major networks, whose traditional fare has tended toward soaps and sitcoms. In a move that would have been unheard-of even a decade before, CBS launched "Touched by an Angel," a prime-time drama that revolves around the love of God and the redemptive power of his messengers. The program ranks consistently high in the Nielsen ratings, and its viewers seem to be unusually community-minded.

Meantime, religion and "values" weigh heavy on the minds of the American public. In the late 1990s, there was a strong, steady, and unprecedented rise among Americans who cited the "breakdown of family values" or decline in morality as the nation's most pressing problem. In virtually every poll, more people cited spiritual ills as a top problem than cited drug abuse, or the health care system, or broken schools, or poverty.[7]

All this suggests that, as formal religious participation declines, Americans seem to be searching for a way to heal spiritual rifts within themselves and within their society. Many houses of worship hope to respond to this spiritual yearning by sponsoring innovative programs to attract the relatively unchurched post-Boomer generations and to lure middle-aged and older lapsed Americans back into the fold. The new "megachurches," which blend spirituality, entertainment, and services for thousands of parishioners, and use corporate strategies to find these new "customers," are a prominent manifestation of such efforts.

As Americans and their religious institutions seek to reconcile after decades of growing alienation, the time is ripe to translate this increasing interest in spirituality into complementary work for community renewal.

Principles of Building Faith-Based Social Capital

Any effort to realize the potential of religious contributions to civic life must be guided by both principles and pragmatism. As pragmatists, we recognize that religion is both important and

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[5] David Holmstrom, "Front Porch Alliance Fosters Church-City Cooperation," *Christian Science Monitor*, 13 May 1998.
[6] Patrice Apodaca, "Southland: Television's Bible Belt," *Los Angeles Times*, 12 January 1998. In 1996 there were 1,573 stations broadcasting religious shows ("Business Digest," *New York Times*, 12 February 1996). Religious programming reached more than 20 million Americans (Caryle Murphy, "They're Finding God on the Radio Dial; Faithful Listeners Give Religious Stations Bigger Share of Airwaves," *Washington Post*, 27 May 1997).
[7] See Gallup polls in December 1997, April 1998, September 1998, January 1999, and May 1999 (summarized at http://www.gallup.com/poll/indicators/Indmip.asp).

contentious in America. A nation founded by pilgrims seeking to escape religious tyranny, the United States has a constitutionally enshrined separation between church and state. After the rights-based social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and amid the growing ethnic and religious diversity that continues today, many Americans have come to believe that freedom of religion also means freedom from religion. While there is no evidence that atheism is on the rise, skepticism or hostility toward religion seems to be more openly expressed now compared to 50 years ago. The historical abuses and misuses of religious faith – that is, the harmful consequences of religious social capital – have made many Americans understandably concerned about mixing private faith and public life. Taken to an extreme, religious impulses can be self-righteous, divisive, and even violent.

Hence, the principles that guide religious involvement in civic renewal must recognize that such efforts hold both potential and peril. The challenge is to nurture religious work grounded in love, not hate, and in unity, not division. We endorse three such principles.

Principle 1: Strengthen Congregations as Civic Institutions. Americans (and the Saguaro members ourselves) are deeply divided over what role, if any, religion should play in public life. This is a controversial issue with many facets, and it will not be resolved soon, if ever. We strongly support the separation of church and state. Contrary to our collective memories, the doctrine of separation of church and state enshrines *two* beliefs: a prohibition on the governmental establishment of religion *and* the protection of religious expression from government interference. We do not advocate that public policy be based on explicitly religious tenets, nor do we favor relaxing the present restrictions on the role of religious institutions in politics.

At the same time, we recognize that houses of worship are vitally important community organizations that have played a central role in many of the great social and political transformations in history – from abolitionism and temperance in the 19th century to the civil-rights and human-rights movements of the 20th century. For many ethnic groups, houses of worship organize civic life: from voters mobilized by African-American churches to sporting leagues organized by Asian-American churches. In varying degrees, houses of worship teach civically relevant values, including compassion, forgiveness, fairness, altruism, and respect for the world beyond oneself. And, of course, houses of worship are vibrant voluntary associations that teach people how to organize events, speak in public, and work together toward common ends – important civic skills on the wane in America.

Secular leaders – whether from government, the academy, organized philanthropy, or the non-profit world – must challenge their assumption that religious organizations are primarily preoccupied with "other worldly" concerns and recognize how deeply these organizations are embedded in the civic life of congregants and their communities. This important civic role should be nurtured and broadened.

Principle 2: Encourage Religious Collaboration to Mediate the Culture War. Commentators on the right have argued that America faces a "culture war" between modernists, who favor individualistic, rights-oriented, and tolerant conceptions of the good society, and traditionalists, who believe the "new morality" has loosed America from its ethical moorings. Some recent

research[8] challenges whether the depth and breadth of the culture war are as great as was asserted. But there is no question that, more than any time in the past century, Americans are deeply divided over cultural values. The traditional class-based debates over economic regulation and the welfare state have given way to emotionally charged debates over abortion, homosexuality, affirmative action, gun control, and God – what social scientists refer to (perhaps optimistically) as "post-materialist politics."[9] These debates are often shrill and unyielding, with each side vilifying the other and no obvious "moderate middle" to broker civility or compromise.

Many of the most divisive political issues have an explicitly religious dimension.[10] In some cases, this is because adherents of a particular faith see scriptural exhortations for their beliefs – about abortion, say, or homosexuality. In other cases, it is because faith communities overlap with value communities – for example, racism is a particular threat to African Americans (many of whom worship in historically black churches), and gun control is a particular concern for those who worship in the conservative congregations of the South.

Given that religion is entangled with many of the public issues of the day, is there a role for religious institutions to play in helping Americans to overcome the incivility, distrust, animosity, and sometimes even violence that these issues have engendered? Can religious institutions help Americans find ways of working through these problems with mutual respect and good will? We believe that they can.

Religious leaders have always been at the forefront of drives for local and national reconciliation. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. brought together an inter-race, inter-faith movement to pursue the promise of a just society, a society where "the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood."[11] In many cities, including Boston, inner-city congregations have taken the lead in defusing tensions between rival gangs and, in the process, have helped greatly to reduce the rate of youth homicide. Across the country, religious leaders have been integral in bringing communities together in the aftermath of hate crimes. In 1993, for example, Billings, Montana, congregations helped to lead a community response to skinheads' vandalism of Jewish homes and African-American churches during the winter holidays. In solidarity with the victims, white congregants attended services at black churches, and Christian churches displayed menorahs during Hanukkah. Meanwhile, Jewish groups have led the charge for anti-hate-crimes laws at the state and national levels.

Bridge-building efforts need not take the form of ongoing educational or legislative programs. They might, instead, consist of occasional spiritually grounded rituals to bring communities together on days of special meaning, such as Martin Luther King's birthday or the anniversary of a particularly devastating natural disaster. Religious leaders are ideally suited to lead communities in non-sectarian rituals of celebration and healing.

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[8] See, for example, Alan Wolfe, *One Nation After All* (New York: Viking, 1998).
[9] See, for example, Ronald Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).
[10] All political judgments, of course, are rooted in some normative framework that is finally grounded in some philosophical/religious worldview, but this "religious" dimension of all political discourse is often not explicit.
[11] From Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered August 28, 1963, Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.

Religious leaders can be successful bridge-builders because they have precisely the right set of resources. For one, they command community respect, and therefore speak with moral authority. Second, by dint of their profession, they counsel, exhort, and persuade audiences totaling tens of millions of people each week. Further, unlike other leaders, religious figures draw inspiration from scriptures that almost universally emphasize peace, fellowship, and altruism; their language is the language of social capital. Because several of us are ministers, we do not presume to suggest how pastors, rabbis, and other clergy members should communicate with their own congregations. However, we do recognize the unique role that religious leaders, including those of us in the Saguaro Seminar, can play in healing broken communities, in addition to broken souls.

Principle 3: Encourage Inter-Faith Collaboration on Social Issues. Houses of worship have always been houses of service, and religious workers have always been social workers. Since the earliest decades of the Republic, congregations and religious charities have run schools, orphanages, old-age homes, and community centers. These activities continue today, albeit at a reduced level. In any given city or town in the United States, one likely finds religious institutions running food and shelter programs for the homeless, self-help programs for the addicted, fellowship programs for new immigrants, classes for welfare recipients, housing developments for the working poor, social activities for singles, and exercise programs for the out-of-shape.

While taken individually these programs serve a valuable purpose, houses of worship have sometimes been more effective when they have worked together.[12] Although institutional jealousies and cultural differences among faiths have been known to get in the way, houses of worship in many places have been able to circumvent such difficulties to spectacular ends. In New York, for example, two consortia of churches, using cut-rate loans from government and private sources, built nearly 3,000 units of "Nehemiah" housing for the working poor, and in the process began the rejuvenation of blighted sections of the Bronx and Brooklyn. More recently, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian leaders in Minnesota have mounted diverse political and educational efforts to reduce gun violence, justifying their involvement with the spiritual adage that "all life is sacred."

Religious coalitions are national, as well. Asserting the "fundamental dignity of each human life," Call to Renewal, a network of churches and faith-based organizations, has launched a major initiative to reduce poverty and overcome racism by strengthening existing church-based efforts and promoting new networks of cooperation. We endorse such collaborative efforts, and urge that government agencies, foundations, businesses, and individuals take a closer look at the feasibility of supporting faith-based collaborations locally.

Recommendations for Building Social Capital Through Faith-Based Groups

[12] We need further research and analysis to discover what types of programs are most effectively done through individual congregations or smaller networks that share common religious commitments and what things are more effectively accomplished through inter-denominational and inter-faith coalitions.

In part because of our different perspectives on organized religion, and in part because America itself is divided on the issue, Saguaro members are reluctant to issue a blueprint for using faith to build social capital. However, we discussed several ideas that are emblematic of the ways that social capitalists could employ faith-based institutions, and the lessons they offer, to restore an ethic of reciprocity, trust, and service in America.

Recommendation 1: Increase "Secular" Funds for Faith-Based Organizations. We encourage private foundations and corporations to abandon their traditionally arms-length relationship with faith-based organizations. Organized philanthropy can play a pivotal role both in brokering partnerships between sectarian and secular organizations and in giving faith communities new sources of financial support.

On the first point, we support efforts by foundations, such as the Pew Charitable Trusts, to shore up faith-based civic engagement and inspire national recognition of the role of faith communities in democratic renewal. Laying the intellectual groundwork for its "Religion and the Public Square" program, Pew has observed that growing numbers of social movements "are of explicitly religious inspiration – whether Protestant, Catholic, Jewish or Muslim – and are playing an increasingly significant role in mobilizing citizens for political action and in shaping the broader public debate." These movements "call into question the assumption that faith commitments are, and should remain, strictly private, safely removed from the public square."[13] At the same time, the movement of religion into the public square obliges Americans to ensure that democratic pluralism can still thrive as religious differences are pushed to the fore.

Organized philanthropy also has a vital role to play in strengthening the financial, physical and volunteer resources of churches that minister to the community. One stumbling block is that big foundations often have evaluation, financial reporting, and other requirements that are difficult for small, non-professional congregations and religious groups to meet. On this point, the evangelical scholar Ronald J. Sider recommends creating "intermediary agencies" to channel contributions to religious entities.[14] These agencies, which could be inter-denominational or intra-denominational, regional or local, would submit proposals to government or private grant makers and then sub-contract with specific congregations providing services. The agencies would bridge the communication gap between religious groups and secular grant makers, and provide technical assistance to congregations on everything from accounting to evaluation.

With respect to government funding of religious organizations, the Saguaro participants, like the rest of Americans, are strongly divided. On the one hand, the "charitable choice" provision of the welfare-reform law holds promise for building social capital and improving the lives of poor women, and faith-based partnerships such as Indianapolis's Front Porch Alliance have shown impressive results in rebuilding community. In addition, recent research suggests that school voucher programs may increase social capital between schools and parents. However, some of us

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[13] Luis E. Lugo, "Religion and the Public Square: Religious Grantmaking at The Pew Charitable Trusts," at http://www.pewtrusts.org/Frame.cfm?Framesource=Programs/Programs.cfm

[14] See Ronald Sider, "Faith-Based Organizations and Community Foundations: Should They Develop a Closer Partnership?" Presentation to Annual Meeting of Larger Community Foundations, 28 January 2000.

are concerned about the intermingling of government funds and religious programming, no matter how many safeguards are in place to preserve the constitutional separation of church and state. We cautiously endorse charitable choice and partnerships between cities and faith-based organizations, so long as there are strict safeguards to prevent government-subsidized proselytizing to service recipients who do not wish to participate and to protect the autonomy of houses of worship. Because we are deeply divided on the wisdom of school voucher programs, we remain agnostic on this issue.

Recommendation 2: Foster Collaboration Between Faith Communities and Secular Service & Advocacy Groups. Faith communities have many resources to contribute to civic causes. These include both moral resources, such as values that inspire action, and organizational resources, such as denominational funds and volunteers from local houses of worship. Bringing secular activists together with religious organizations would follow our principle of building "bridging" social capital across lines of belief and greatly expand movements for social betterment.

For example, in 1993, leaders from four faith traditions (Catholic, Church of Christ, Jewish, and Evangelical) founded the National Religious Partnership on the Environment after prominent scientists called on faith communities to take on conservation as a moral obligation. Since then, the Partnership has helped local congregations to link church-based volunteers to local environmental groups, provided guidance on environmental sermons, and enlisted religious leaders to lobby for stronger environmental laws.[15] On a local level, working through the Citizen Leaders program of Imagine Chicago, religious congregations have nominated especially far-sighted parishioners to help design projects to strengthen their congregation and community. One of the projects, a "family health night" held at a church in the Englewood section of Chicago, has evolved into a larger social-improvement program for the entire neighborhood. The National Religious Partnership on the Environment and the Citizen Leaders program are two models for collaboration between faith communities and secular organizations that can be applied to a broader range of issues and geographic areas.

Recommendation 3: Promote Values in Secular Organizations. One Saguaro participant noted that religious group membership is a "code for values." Membership in faith groups is attractive because it gives members a moral compass and signals to others a commitment to shared values. The Saguaro members suggested that non-faith-based groups could do more to provide members with a moral compass and engender a "values ethos" among them. We would like to see non-faith groups stop shying away from an explicit commitment to values. Such a commitment creates stronger bonds of trust and reciprocity.

Recommendation 4: Put More than Money in the Collection Plate. In Boston, some area synagogues are substituting service for dues: Members can pay off their financial obligation with hours of volunteer service. One Saguaro participant offered an intriguing and expanded parallel. Congregations should encourage their members to put "social capital promises for the

[15] The coalition consisted of the Evangelical Environmental Network, the Coalition on the Environment & Jewish Life, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and the United States Catholic Conference (more information is available at: www.nrpe.org).

congregation and for the broader community" in the collection plate in addition to, or instead of, donations. For example, one member might pledge to read to a neighboring blind person; another might commit to watching a parishioner's children when she went to apply for a job. Translating religious reciprocity into social service follows our principle of "Recycling" social capital, as well as our principle of building social capital "C2C." As one Saguaro participant noted, "Time and talent precede treasure in a tithe."

Concluding Thoughts

Beyond endorsing the broad principles or strategies above, we are reluctant to offer specific recommendations to houses of worship and their leaders about how to build social capital. As a religiously diverse group, we would not pretend to advise any religious organization about how to carry out its particular spiritual mission. Our major conclusion is that religious institutions have the capacity to make the most of their unique role, and that the American public ought to honor and support that role within the bounds of the Free Exercise and Non-Establishment Clauses of the Constitution. We are persuaded by surveys and anecdotal evidence that, in an age of unbridled prosperity, many Americans feel a spiritual void and a cynicism about their fellow citizens. We believe that religious organizations are naturally suited to uplifting our national spirit.

FORSYTH COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

Habitat for Humanity

It all happens around a hammer. "A lot of plywood and a hammer," says Sonja Murray, Development Director of Habitat For Humanity of Forsyth County. "Black and white people, Christians, Jews, and Muslims, work side by side to build a house together. A wall is so important. You focus on building that real wall, doing that physical task, everybody an asset in making it happen, and other kinds of walls start to crack and fall. The white person is just the other guy holding the door for the black man while he works on the frame; the Muslim is someone the Jew has to trust not to drop that piece of sheet rock on his head."

"In our community," Murray continues, "no force has the opportunity of doing more good than improving race relations. And 11 a.m. on Sunday is the most segregated hour of the week. It's ironic that our places of worship are now just about the most segregated places in the county."

So, in 1996, in an effort to encourage black and white religious congregations to work together, this Habitat for Humanity chapter began using Winston-Salem Foundation grant funds to sponsor the joint project of building homes. By mid-2000, nine houses had been built under that initiative; a tenth had been inspired, jointly sponsored by two women's groups, the mostly white Junior League and the mostly black sorority of Delta Sigma Theta.

Two of the nine sponsored houses were built by the joint partnership of Redeemer Presbyterian Church and Goler Memorial AME Zion Church. They have since furthered that relationship by attending each other's services, arranging pulpit switches, choir swaps, and joint musical concerts, and working together to support Kids' Café, an after-school meals program for young people.

Another of the nine houses was *triple* sponsored. Highland Presbyterian Church and Temple Emanuel, institutions that share a parking lot and had held joint Thanksgiving celebrations, partnered with the Masjid Al'Muminum Mosque. Hundreds of volunteers from all three congregations worked together for four months to build a house for a black Pentecostal Christian woman and her two sons. At the dedication ceremony, a handful of soil from the ground of each of the three congregations was mixed into the earth in front of the house. The three groups of builders and the new occupants prayed that this project might "knit together in enduring affection those who have become friends in this build." Says Gloria Cole, the homeowner, "If I were blind, you would have to convince me that these people were not my brothers and my sisters."

Contact: www.habitat.org/local 336-765-8854

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Greater Boston Interfaith Organization

If Frank knows Gerthy's story, they have the beginning of a relationship. If Frank and Gerthy know each other's stories, and Karmyn's story as well, they share the possibility for the beginning of an organization.

"One on one, people have to tell each other their stories," says organizer Julia Greene, of the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO). "I ask people to tell each other four things: *Who are you? What do you like? What troubles you? What would you like to do about it?* People get to know each other, to trust each other. You begin to incorporate the other person's story into who you are. You start to be willing to work together because you have shared personal stories that highlight your similarities."

Greene recalls one "Fish Bowl" conversation in a church parish hall in the city's Dorchester section. "At a community training meeting of thirty or forty people -- a really mixed group of old-time white residents, Cape Verdeans, Haitians, a real United Nations session -- two people agreed to have a one-on-one while the rest of us watched and listened. One…was an older Irish-American woman who had lived in Dorchester her whole life. The other was a…younger, South Vietnamese man who had come here as a teenager, then gotten married and stayed in the community. *'I like it here,' the man says, 'I want to raise my family here.' 'I'm glad you're here,' the woman says. And then she adds, 'I really like this neighborhood, too. All the diversity. I don't even have to travel, I just walk the streets.'* "When the conversation was over," continues Greene, "the rest of us de-briefed it. One of the other people, when asked what she had learned, said, 'I really learned that he loves it here. Like I do. I thought he lived here because he had no place else to go.' "

Almost four years, and twenty thousand conversations later, hundreds of "House Meetings" were held. It was determined, first, that GBIO members wanted to work together on a big project, and, second, that their major concern was housing. The membership developed three main goals: to increase state funding for affordable living space; to provide more protection for tenants; and to acquire more land on which to build new low-cost housing. They decided that local and state politicians would be sufficiently impressed to take action if GBIO got 100,000 people to sign a petition that listed their goals.

With the accumulated social capital from all their shared stories, GBIO volunteers and staff members hit the streets, working in teams to gather signatures. "I did it for my team and for my boys," says Gerthy Lahens, a single mother of four who has been twice homeless since arriving in Boston from Haiti in 1985. "We don't have savings bonds or whatever, so what I can give them is this – hope and meaning, and ways to make things change."

"One cold winter day," said organizer Greene, "we had to buy expensive pens, so the ink wouldn't freeze and we'd lose a signature. A middle-aged white Episcopalian man was working a bus stop in a very African-American section of Roxbury. A black bus driver stopped his bus and opened the door and demanded to know what was going on. After he was told about the housing petition, he said to the volunteer, 'Come on, get on, I'll sign it.' And then he asked the whole bus to sign, and kept the bus there while they did."

GBIO exceeded its goal, and collected 125,000 signatures. As a result, a Housing Trust Fund was created that will make available one hundred million dollars over the next five years.

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YOUTH AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

To each generation of adults, the phrase "America's youth" evokes powerful and contradictory images. On the one hand, we might think of the Columbine High School shooters and gangbangers, couch potatoes, video game addicts, slouches and slackers. But we are just as likely to see soccer players, software entrepreneurs, environmental activists, hip-hop artists, Scouts, and workers in the family business. Whether good or bad, the prevailing images or stereotypes of young people often say as much about the communities in which youths are coming of age as about the young people themselves.

Adult society all too frequently overlooks young people, except when they get into trouble. Young people want what everyone else wants: affiliation, community, solidarity, respect, success, and opportunity. Whether those needs are provided by gangs – or conversely by schools, houses of worship, and sports leagues – is up to us as a society. And the choice we make has short- and long-term ramifications. The nature of the social capital available to young people influences how well they learn, the odds that they will attend college, whether they commit crimes, and the likelihood that they will do drugs or commit suicide. In a nation that prides itself on constant reinvention, young people represent the promise of a stronger America, and their well-being is a leading indicator of the long-term health of our communities. As our young people go, so goes our nation.

Because young people embody our hopes and carry out our dreams, they and the organizations of which they are a part must be at the center of efforts to rebuild social capital. In this chapter, we focus on those young people between the ages of 10 and 21, because they are old enough to understand civic obligations but still young enough to be forming civic habits. Young people have a role as targets of community-building work and as active leaders and participants in it. Just as we don't expect adult proficiency in any field without years of practice, we cannot expect young people to create a better community without first having learned the skills and *habits of the heart* necessary to civic engagement. Sadly, however, children and teenagers are too rarely included in American civic life, either in decision-making or contributing roles. American youth-focused institutions, such as schools and after-school programs, are not generally designed to solicit young people's input on issues of governance, program development, or problem solving. This lapse translates into thousands of squandered opportunities to prepare the next generation of social capitalists. It will take a major shift in attitude and practice to create a lifelong pathway of civic engagement.

Role of Schools, Youth Organizations, and Families in Building Social Capital

Most American young people are embedded in three types of communities: school, extracurricular groups (which include religious communities, clubs and sports leagues, and informal communities of friends), and the family. It is in these three categories of places that young people meet and associate with the most important people in their lives: parents, siblings, friends, coaches, teachers, and mentors. And it is in these places that young people learn what is expected of them and what to expect from others, especially adults. In short, it is in these places

that young people learn powerful lessons, both good and bad, about the role of the individual in society. These three communities all create and depend on social capital and depend upon it. A school, for example, teaches about public affairs and provides a springboard for volunteering in the community; at the same time, how well the school performs these educational and civic functions depends crucially on the involvement and cooperation of parents and community organizations.

Schools and Social Capital. Schools encourage civic engagement in myriad ways. First, and most obviously, schools teach the basic skills necessary to participate in civic life: reading, writing, public speaking, teamwork, and project organizing. Research going back more than a half-century has consistently found a strong, direct relationship between education and civic participation. A higher level of education, more than income or any other characteristic, affects the likelihood of participating in civic affairs. More education equals more participation. Second, schools are where students learn how American democracy works. In the classroom, children learn (or should) about the people and structures that make up our federal system of government and about the various ways – such as voting – that citizens are expected to contribute and exercise influence. Third, children participate in a peer culture at school that profoundly shapes their values and relationships. Fourth, schools sponsor programs that provide hands-on training in civic participation. Besides the traditional array of student-run clubs (debate society, student government, Spanish club, and so forth), schools in record numbers are sponsoring programs to link students to their communities. Roughly half of all public elementary, middle, and high schools require students to participate in community service,[1] and the fraction of religious schools requiring service may be higher. School-based "service-learning" programs provide students with a role in improving the wider community while frequently asking them to reflect on their experience.

Extracurricular Activities and Social Capital. When they aren't in class, young people often are interacting with friends, teammates, fellow club members, and co-workers. Young people's social universe increasingly mirrors that of adults. It is a community of choice, rather than circumstance. As young people seem to grow up faster and more independently than their parents did, we as a society need to pay attention to the lessons propagated by these communities of choice. We need to ask tough questions. Is the youth hockey program teaching a social-capital-friendly ethic of teamwork, or a destructive ethic of winning-at-all-costs? Is the after-school job teaching responsibility and building community – or is it merely providing cash to fuel a selfish materialism? Are "virtual" friends in Internet chat rooms offering the same benefits as friends in face-to-face organizations? The truth is, we know far more about the quantity of youthful engagement than we know about its quality.

Families and Social Capital. The American family is an important incubator of social capital. It is in families that young people ideally learn to share, cooperate, and contribute to a common good. Families are, in a sense, small communities in which norms of reciprocity and

[1] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), "National Student Service-Learning and Community Service Survey," FRSS 71, 1999, cited in NCES, "Service-Learning and Community Service in K-12 Public Schools," September 1999, p. 8.

responsibility are most firmly inculcated. Families – whether traditional, non-traditional, blended, or extended – also provide powerful role models. Having parents who participate is one of the best indicators of whether a young person will go on to vote, join community groups, or otherwise participate in the community.

Trends in Youth Engagement

Much as parents love their children, the older generation always has viewed the younger generation with a mix of hope and alarm. On the one hand, adults hope their children will improve upon the society they have inherited. On the other hand, each generation of young people seems all too willing to discard tradition, embrace individualism, and chart its own course. How well the younger generation lives up to the expectations of its parents, or to its own goals, is a question to which every generation, sooner or later, turns its attention.

With respect to the present generation of young people, sometimes written off as a group of apathetic "slackers" the reality is slightly better than the perception. On the positive side, young adults today are more likely to volunteer than were young adults at any time over the past 25 years. Both the fraction of adults under 30 who volunteer and the average number of times they volunteer per year have increased significantly over the past generation.[2] A recent study showed that, in just three years, the percentage of high-school-aged volunteers increased by 10%, to 55% of all students.[3] This service ethic needs to be nurtured and used as the foundation for other forms of social capital and civic engagement.

On the negative side, by every other indicator of civic-mindedness, the younger generation is providing little cause for hope. Just like their parents, young adults are tuning out of civic affairs. Not only do today's young adults participate less than older adults, but the younger set also participates far less than did its same-age counterparts 10 or 20 years ago.

Consider some sobering findings. Every year since the mid-1960s, the University of California at Los Angeles has surveyed a nationally representative sample of college freshmen to gauge their values and priorities. In the mid-1960s, these young adults were significantly more interested in keeping up-to-date with politics than they were in making money. Today, those priorities are dramatically reversed. Roughly three-quarters of college freshmen in the late 1990s said that being "very well-off financially" is a "very important" personal goal; by contrast, fewer than one-third rated as "very important" such civic-minded activities as keeping up with politics, being involved in community action, or helping to clean up the environment. Young adults have also become much less likely to trust other people, less likely to support charities, less likely to vote (and less likely to feel guilty about avoiding the polls), less likely to attend community meetings, less likely to attend houses of worship, and less likely to keep up with public affairs.[4] There are

[2] Kristin A. Goss, "Volunteering and the Long Civic Generation." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 28 (4), December 1999, 378-415.
[3] Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, "Special Indicator Finds High School Volunteerism Up 10 Percent" (at http://www.nichd.nih.gov/new/releases/americasfinds.htm).
[4] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), pp. 260-261.

many theories for why the younger generation has dropped out of civic life: the rise in entertainment technology, such as television, video games, and computers; the selfish values allegedly perpetuated by Boomer parents; the perception that America is humming along and so we can turn our attention to private pursuits; and so forth. There may be truth to these explanations, among others. But, whatever the reason for their apathy, we cannot ignore the fact that young people are a reflection of who we are as a society and a portent of where we are headed. These youthful indicators should dampen our optimism about increased youth volunteering.

Further, it is not merely civic indicators that are down. Young people are far less likely to seek and find social capital in informal settings, such as in the family home or the neighborhood, than were young people a generation ago. Surveys show that the major forms of family togetherness are all in decline. Most notably, the family meal is quickly becoming a thing of the past. In the past decade or two, surveys of both parents and kids have revealed a steady decline of more than one third in the frequency with which families eat dinner together. As political scientist Robert Putnam has noted: "Since the evening meal has been a communal experience in virtually all societies for a very long time, the fact that it has visibly diminished in the course of a single generation in our country is remarkable evidence of how rapidly our social connectedness has been changing."[5] The end of the family meal is only one of many ominous indicators. Among families with children aged 8 to 17, there has been a drop of roughly 20-30% over just 20 years in the fraction of people who vacation together as a family, watch TV together, attend religious services together, and "just sit and talk" together.[6] Indeed, sociologists have found recently that the average American teenager spends more time alone than with family and friends.[7]

Perhaps as a result of this social isolation, the rates of unhappiness, malaise, depression, and even suicide have increased dramatically among young people.[8] Although suicide has steadily declined among people over 45, it has increased dramatically among people under 35. People born and raised in the 1970s and 1980s were three to four times as likely to commit suicide as were people who came of age in the 1950s.[9] That is not to say that all the news is so dire. In part because of increased prosperity and better public education programs, children's lives have improved in many ways. Compared to a decade ago, young people are less likely to live in poverty (although a fifth still do), less likely to become teenage parents, less likely to be involved in crime or to go hungry; and they are more likely to be enrolled in early-education programs and to get immunized. Doing things *for* our children has risen, even as doing things *with* them has declined. It is less clear whether these positive indicators will lead to similar improvements in these children's sense of wellbeing and incorporation into community and civic life.

It will not be simple to reverse the generational downturn in civic engagement and social capital. Television and computer technology play a vital role in modern life, and they are here to stay. Likewise, there is little reason to believe that families will, or should, return to the domestic

[5] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp. 100-101.
[6] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 101.
[7] Barbara Schneider and David Stevenson, *The Ambitious Generation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 192.
[8] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp. 262-264.
[9] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 262.

patterns of the 1950s, which drove many women to despair and gave rise to what Betty Friedan labeled "the problem that has no name."[10] The challenge to those concerned about dwindling social capital is to embrace the technological and social changes that have brought so much good in recent years, while finding new ways to create social-capital-rich environments for young people in spite of, and ideally because of, these changes. Again, the answer likely will come once we face up to the mismatch between what we expect of young people and the institutions that exist to help them fulfill their promise. As a society, we need to take a serious look at ways to increase the incentives for creating youth-oriented social capital and to remove the disincentives.

Promising Initiatives to Engage Young People

If we are to see a broad grassroots movement to reengage America, it will vitally involve today's young people. Fortunately, the groundwork is being laid for precisely such involvement. With financial help from government and private philanthropy, a small cadre of visionaries has created and sustained a new set of organizations that are recruiting tens of thousands of young people in service to their communities, and in the process are instilling civic skills and an ethic of social responsibility. The community service movement, as the leaders refer to it, began with a few entrepreneurial service corps in the late-1970s and first half of the 1980s. The movement picked up momentum in the early 1990s, with the passage of the federal legislation that created the highly successful AmeriCorps program, a domestic Peace Corps offering young adults a modest stipend and tuition benefit in exchange for a year's service to the community.

The AmeriCorps program, which engages more than 40,000 young people each year in 1,000 programs nationwide, has helped to make community service "hip." The program has also provided organizational and psychic solidarity to 150,000 (and counting) of the nation's most civic-minded young people. Besides the effects on young people, the program has provided financial stability to youth-service corps and fueled the creation of state community-service commissions, which distribute much of the AmeriCorps funds.

Both with and without AmeriCorps money, national non-profit organizations have provided the infrastructure to keep the youth-service movement alive. Among the strongest of these organizations are service corps such as City Year, Public Allies, YouthBuild USA and the local and state members of the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps; groups that promote college-based volunteering, such as the Campus Outreach Opportunity League and the Campus Compact; traditional youth organizations, such as 4-H Clubs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts; established non-profits that are shoring up their youth components, such as the Urban League and the American Red Cross; newer organizations that train teens for civic work, such as Youth on Board (which places young people on the governing boards of non-profit groups) and Magic Me (which places middle-school students in service to elderly and mentally disabled people); and umbrella groups like Youth Service America that helped conceptualize, mobilize, and shepherd this growing movement. Reaching audiences in the millions, organizations like 4-H are expanding and retooling their practices to engage suburban young

[10] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Dell, 1963), Chapter 1.

people, while the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts are finding ways to appeal to inner-city teens or immigrants.

Alongside the community service movement are scores of other efforts, private and often informal, that have also found innovative ways to build social capital among young people. In many urban areas, for example, young people have organized poetry slams and hip-hop freestyle sessions, set up entrepreneurial youth mini-malls, and built skateboarding parks. In the suburbs, youth soccer has soared in popularity. On television, the video station MTV has covered politics and urged youth participation through campaigns such as Rock the Vote and Choose or Lose.

Challenges to Increasing Youth Engagement

School- and community-based service corps have demonstrated the potential for civic engagement of young people from all socioeconomic backgrounds. However, the practice of taking young people seriously has not yet become standard operating procedure in schools, community organizations, or politics. Instead, the scattered efforts of visionaries who see young people as resources have run up against the assumption, valid or not, that young people are too cynical, materialistic, and apathetic to want to make a difference, or the misperception that young people are too inexperienced, uninformed or unwise to be consulted on issues affecting them.

Re-engaging young people will involve surmounting several formidable challenges. First, leaders will have to make a compelling case – running contrary to everything young people think they know – that participation actually does matter. Leaders will have to provide tangible evidence that, contrary to popular assumption, American democracy still does respond to the wishes of its citizens. The members of the Saguaro Seminar believe that young people's impulse to tune out is based at least in part on a reasonable assessment of democracy's shortcomings. The challenge to adults and young people is to create opportunities for consequential participation. Second, to capture the fleeting attention of the TV-and-video-game generation, entrepreneurs will have to create or alter organizations so that participation is not only meaningful in the long term but also gratifying and fun in the short term. Endless meetings governed by Robert's Rules of Order are unlikely to hold the attention of Generations X and Y, whose members are inexorably drawn to incoming e-mails and new episodes of "Friends." Third, we will need to train a new cohort of adults who value and foster meaningful contributions by young people. Finally, creating social-capital-rich communities for young people necessarily entails grappling with the transformation of families and the challenges facing both schools and houses of worship, which were the stalwart youth communities of old.

Principles of Building Social Capital Among Young People

While all youth engagement opportunities are important, some are better than others at creating meaningful, lasting patterns of civic engagement. The best opportunities for young people to contribute generally abide by three principles.

Principle1: Respect Young People. Successful efforts to engage young people will treat them with dignity and laud their achievements.

Principle 2: Provide Meaningful Engagement. Programs and organizations ought to address significant problems or passions in young people's lives, and preferably in the larger community in which they live. In addition, these efforts must allow young people to provide consequential input into decision-making and to produce tangible solutions or products – as opposed to offering meaningless exercises.

***Principle 3: Inculcate Civic Values*.** Successful youth-engagement efforts will be grounded in practices that enhance young people's development, through high expectations, sustained by adult support and a peer group with explicitly positive values.

Recommendations for Building Social Capital Among Young People

We offer 13 recommendations for increasing social capital and civic engagement among young people. We have organized those recommendations around the three categories of institutions that are most influential in young people's lives: schools, community organizations, and families.

Schools. We urge that schools and school boards fund community service-learning opportunities for all middle- and high-school students, create smaller "schools within schools", offer a broad array of extracurricular activities, start more programs to re-connect out-of-school youths with educational and community institutions, and expand civics education. We also ask schools to provide for active student government that has a say in some aspects of school operations.

Community Organizations. We endorse a generalized strategy to promote youth engagement outside the school walls, including expanding intergenerational mentoring programs, increasing funding for AmeriCorps, creating new ways to involve young people in running community organizations, and providing tangible rewards for service.

Families. We urge adults to turn off the television and redouble their efforts to connect with their children and to help their children connect with the community. Because an ethic of civic obligation is fading with the World War II generation, we especially urge adults to link young adults with older people. Such relationships would benefit members of all generations.

Recommendations for Building Social Capital in Schools

Any effort to re-engage young people must begin with the schools. The typical American young person spends seven to eight hours a day at school, longer if extracurricular sports practices and club meetings are involved. Most young people spend more waking hours with schoolmates than with parents. For many young people, the most influential mentor is a teacher, and these relationships, forged at a key time in a young person's development, can have effects that last a lifetime. In short, schools are a vitally important community.

Education perennially ranks among Americans' top concerns. Legions of experts and experiments are devoted to reforming and restructuring our nation's schools. Education policy is a contentious issue, in America at large and among the Saguaro Seminar participants, as well. We are not united about the wisdom of numerous educational strategies, including taxpayer-financed vouchers for private schooling and the creation of charter schools. We are pleased, however, to see that debates over these reforms have called attention to the vital importance of parental involvement in schools and in education policy discussions. Schools cannot create social capital for students without the cooperation and involvement of parents.

Schools are communities, but they are communities at risk. We need to reform education not only to improve students' grasp of the "three R's", or powers of analysis and reasoning, but also to teach norms of responsibility, trust, and reciprocity. Toward that end, we recommend the following 13 recommendations for making educational communities even stronger.

Recommendation 1: Require Community Service of All Students. Each year, more and more schools require students to fulfill a set number of hours of community service as a condition of graduation. In some cases, the requirements are city- or state-wide. In 1993, for example, Maryland became the first state to require service of all public high school students. A growing body of academic research suggests that these programs not only help students learn, but also bolster values and practices necessary to build social capital. Service-learning programs have been found to increase students' sense of social responsibility, compassion, tolerance, and belonging to a broader community.[11] Studies also have found that positive outcomes are more likely the longer the student participates. In light of these powerful and consistent findings, we urge every elementary, middle and high school in America to require all students to participate in community service – not only during one year (as is common practice today) but during *every* year students are in school. Because community service programs will backfire if students can't see tangible benefits from their work, we urge that schools take these programs seriously by allotting money and staff hours to finding meaningful and well-run service programs, rather than leaving it up to individual students to find opportunities on their own. We further urge that community service be built into courses to the fullest extent possible, with structured time for students to reflect on their experiences. Often, community service allows students to meet people unlike themselves, such as seniors or poor single moms, and thus offers an excellent means of furthering our principle of building "bridging" social capital.

Recommendation 2: Create Smaller Schools. Gigantic, impersonal high schools, especially urban schools, both reflect and exacerbate the society-wide disappearance of caring communities. In big-city and suburban schools, overworked teachers have unsupervised students, and both feel powerless to affect their immediate environment. An ethic of trust, participation, and mutual responsibility is difficult to instill in such settings. To create the conditions for civic engagement to flourish, schools must be radically restructured as mini-communities, in which people know and trust each other. Engaging in problem-solving and program development together will reverse

[11] For a summary of the research, see Kristin A. Goss, "Community Service Learning: Prevalence and Program Effects." Unpublished ms. August 1997.

the sense of isolation and powerlessness and create communities in which students can learn and practice civic behavior.

Over the past decade, innovators have sought to create educational spaces in which students, teachers, and parents address issues together, help each other learn, and collectively take an interest in the world around them.[12] These efforts go by various names, such as "community schools" and "charter schools." Smaller schools have numerous advantages over their large, impersonal counterparts. Although small schools can be autocratic, face-to-face deliberative democracy is the far more likely norm of operation. Smaller classes diminish the emphasis an individual teacher must place on control and discipline and increase the potential for learning and interaction. Smaller schools also reduce the principal's reliance on rules and discipline, allowing him or her to focus on relationships, curriculum development, teacher training, and community involvement. In the finest tradition of small towns, small schools also are less likely than large schools to let students fall through the cracks, and are more likely to maintain high expectations for young people. It is in this sort of environment that students can most easily assume leadership and decision-making roles.[13] We call on citizens to ask their local school boards to create smaller schools within schools. Resources on how to do this are available from the Annenberg Institute for School Reform and the Coalition of Essential Schools at Brown University in Providence, R.I.[14]

Recommendation 3: Restore Extracurricular Activities. Extracurricular activities are a vitally important source of social capital for many young people. It is in these activities where young people make friends and have repeated, face-to-face interactions with others, often in pursuit of a common goal, such as producing a school play or winning a ballgame. Besides providing the psychic benefits of solidarity and commitment, extracurricular activities teach valuable civic skills, such as public speaking, teamwork, and organization. Powerful and growing evidence shows that the maxim "as the twig is bent, so grows the tree," applies to involvement in youth extracurricular activities. In keeping with our "Recycling" principle, these activities strongly increase the odds of civic and political participation as an adult.[15] Extracurricular activities also

[12] One of the most successful experiments in transforming large schools was carried out by District Superintendent Anthony Alvarado in the East Harlem section of New York City during the 1970s. Each elementary school and junior high was divided into several schools. Directors for these schools were chosen from among teachers who offered proposals for innovative schools. The small schools had different curricular emphases and philosophies of learning. Parents chose which school they wanted their children to attend. Within a few years, the energy from innovation was flowing, and the students' academic scores had risen dramatically. Before the restructuring, East Harlem District 4 was the worst of the 32 New York City school districts with only 16% of children reading "at grade level." By 1987, after more than a decade of restructuring, the district was 15th out of 32 districts, and 63% of students were at grade reading level. [See Sy Fliegel, *Miracle in East Harlem: The Fight for Choice in Public Education* (New York: Times Books, 1993), pp. 3-4]. East Harlem soon became a flagship for the school-choice movement.

[13] Educational researchers are finding that schools where democracy is practiced are places where faculty engagement, student engagement, and student academic achievement all coalesce. The Coalition of Essential Schools has latched onto the importance of these relationships. The more than 1,000 schools and 24 regional support centers in this network commit to 10 basic principles of education stemming from the research of Theodore Sizer, but implement these principles differently.

[14] See http://www.aisr.brown.edu and http://www.essentialschools.org

[15] Michael Hanks, "Youth, Voluntary Associations, and Political Socialization," *Social Forces* 60 (1981), 211-23; Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 423-442, 449, 452; Paul Allen Beck and M. Kent Jennings, "Pathways to Participation," *American Political Science Review*, 76 (1), March 1982, 94-108; David Ziblatt, "High School Extracurricular Activities and Political Socialization," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 361 (1965): 20-31; and John Wilson and Thomas Janoski,

further the "C2C" principle because they provide a forum for students to help one another in pursuit of a common goal, with minimal interference from adult "experts."

Yet, for all these programs' documented good, school spending on extracurricular activities has dropped over the last several decades. For example, in New York City, funding for sports materials, equipment and supplies has fallen by nearly 20% in real terms since 1990.[16] Likewise, school orchestras are far less likely to be found in junior high schools and high schools than they were a generation ago.[17] Affluent communities have tried to make up for these losses by relying on parents to organize and run events and to finance them through specially created foundations and booster clubs. While we applaud parental involvement, parents, no matter how committed, are unlikely to be able to fulfill the organizational and financial role that schools used to assume. This is especially true of low-income communities, where parents lack the discretionary time and money to sustain sports leagues and school bands. Because extracurricular activities have benefits far beyond the individual children involved, we recommend a society-wide commitment to revitalizing them.

First, the federal and state governments should direct additional resources into these after-school enrichment activities. Special attention should be focused on creating these opportunities where they are least available, and on creating organizations that span racial, religious, ideological, class, and gender divides. Every dollar spent on extracurricular activities yields social and economic benefits down the line. Young people who participate will be more likely to stay in school, stay out of trouble, work well with diverse individuals, go to college, get a good job, and support the nation through taxes and civic leadership.

Second, the nation needs a public-education campaign that encourages citizens to get involved in helping to organize and volunteer for after-school programs, especially in low-income neighborhoods. For example, professionals might be urged to help Citizen Schools, which offer after-school apprenticeships in everything from Web design to music-writing to carpentry. Parents need to play an active role, not only in volunteering for after-school programs, but also in encouraging young people to find enjoyment in collective activities. Parental exhortations do matter. In a 1989 People For the American Way survey, for example, fully 45% of uninvolved young people said they had not engaged in community service because their parents had not encouraged it, and 42% said that no one asks young people to get involved or shows them how to do it.[18]

"The Contribution of Religion to Volunteer Work," *Sociology of Religion* 56 (Summer 1995), 137-152, esp. p. 148. A study by Nichloas Zill, Christin Winquist Nord, and Laura Spencer Loomis – "Adolescent Time Use, Risky Behavior, and Outcomes: An Analysis of National Data" (at http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/cyp/xstimuse.htm) – shows that participation in most extracurricular activities is associated with reduced levels of risky behavior (smoking, drug use, binge drinking, teen parenthood, arrest), controlling for other student and parental factors.

[16] Kirk Johnson, "For New York, 25-Year Losing Streak," *New York Times*, 13 January 1999.

[17] MENC: The National Association for Music Education reports that the percentage of high schools with orchestras was halved from 69.5% in 1962 to 32% in 1989, and the percentage of junior high schools with orchestras plummeted from 66.7% in 1962 to 16.7% in 1989. By 1996, only 13.9% of *all* schools offered orchestra (see http://www.menc.org/publication/press/menc.html). This trend is especially discouraging given what the NEA has learned from surveys – that lifelong musical habits are usually acquired in youth.

Recommendation 4: Make "Civics" Relevant. We need to invest substantially in all three legs of civics education: creating civic *skills*, imparting civic *knowledge*, and developing civic *values*. Research shows that civic skills and civic knowledge are strong determinants of later civic participation; and while they can be learned by experience, both civic skills and knowledge (but especially knowledge) can be taught.[19] Civic-literacy programs provide young people with the knowledge and skills they need to be active citizens – and to have influence in community affairs. We need to reverse the gradual disappearance of civics from the standard curriculum of American high schools over the last several decades.

To increase both the quality and quantity of civic education in America is the mission of groups like the National Alliance for Civic Education and the American Political Science Association's Task Force on Civic Education for the Next Century, and we endorse their activities. In the interim, teachers can build action into civics courses. Rather than simply learning how a bill becomes law, imagine a South Central Los Angeles high-school civics instructor working with students to bring about a change they see as important (for example, getting lights for a neighborhood basketball court, or trying to get a liquor store moved out of the neighborhood). Education by Design, based at Antioch New England Graduate School, has a "Learning by Real Problems" approach that is now used to teach civic skills in more than 400 schools in New York and New England. KidsVoting USA teaches young people about the political process and enables them to cast mock ballots recorded with their parents.[20] Schools might also work with civic organizations to carry out voter registration drives, something that can happen in every city and town in America. Even if schools don't offer civics as a separate course, they can teach civic skills and impart political knowledge in other courses (such as history and social studies) and work with community groups to run after-school programs in which young people learn to be stewards of American democracy. In sum, we need both bottom-up innovation and a top-down push from all segments of society to ensure more and higher- quality civics programs for young citizens.

Recommendation 5: Reconnect and Re-engage School Dropouts. Almost one in every eleven students nation-wide dropped out of high school in 1997. This is more common among the poor. Among children of families in the bottom 20% of the income scale, about one in every seven 10th-12th graders (about 13%) dropped out of school in 1995.[21] There were 1.2 million out-of-school,

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[18] People For the American Way, *Democracy's Next Generation: A Study of Youth and Teachers* (Washington, D.C. 1989), pp. 56, 59.

[19] See, for example, "A Selected Review of Trends and Influences of Civic Participation," Center for the Study of Political Psychology, University of Minnesota, 1997, p. 6.

[20] Discussions of current events in class, as well as participation in mock elections, increase civic knowledge. And some recent research suggests that certain types of civics education programs can increase not only kids' civic involvement, but also that of their parents. In a study of KidsVoting USA, researchers found that when young people discuss politics at home, they increase their parents' political knowledge. See Michael McDevitt and Steven H. Chaffee, "Second Chance Political Socialization: 'Trickle-Up' Effects of Children on Parents," in *Engaging the Public: How Government and the Media Can Reinvigorate American Democracy*, ed. T.J. Johnson, C.E. Hays, and S.P. Hays (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998). The study also found that, when kids have the opportunity to cast "mock ballots" on election day, their parents are more likely to go to the polls.

unemployed youths aged 16-24 in 1998.[22] In light of these staggering figures, it is important to make sure that strategies to build social capital among young people do not assume that they always can be found at the schoolhouse. Nor should we assume that only those in schools are capable of civic engagement. In fact, civic engagement can be a critical motivating force for bringing young people who have dropped out of school back to a productive educational and occupational track.

Most high-school dropouts who fail to find good jobs eventually further their education by earning a GED and/or by enrolling in a training program, community college, or four-year university. If they discover through this process that they are being taken seriously as potential leaders, their confidence and determination grow. This is one of the secrets to the success of youth service corps that target at-risk populations. These programs attract and hold dropouts by combining education, job training, and the opportunity to do visible community work that enhances their self-worth and motivation to aim higher. Rather than being trained for low-wage, dead-end jobs in which obedience is the primary value, these young people are trained for visible roles as spokespeople, thinkers, organizers, and citizen activists. Recently, the Department of Housing and Urban Development received 2,200 applications from organizations wanting to run YouthBuild programs, which teach civic values and construction skills to young adults, while they build low-income housing and obtain their GEDs or high school diplomas. The interest in YouthBuild only hints at the demand and capacity at the local level for programs to re-engage hard-to-reach young people.

These programs would grow faster with better funding. Some national foundations have directed their grant making toward strategies that treat low-income young people as service providers rather than as service recipients. For example, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation systematically funds national organizations that support young people in leadership roles, community service, and civic engagement. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation is devoting all its resources to youth development, with a special emphasis on disadvantaged young people. The Ford Foundation has announced an initiative to foster youth leadership. More foundations need to take up this approach, and the federal and state governments should follow suit with dedicated streams of funds to help reconnect lost young people to the mainstream of civic and economic life.

Recommendations for Building Social Capital in Community Organizations

For good or bad, young people are far less tethered to home and hearth than they were in the past. More than ever before, young people have jobs in the community, drive their own cars, have access to global communications media, and expect to move out of state after high school. As young people become more independent, they increasingly find their communities of meaning outside the structures of school and family. For that reason, it is incumbent on government and

[21] "No. 303: High School Dropouts by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1997," *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1999) (at www.census.gov/prod/www/statistical-abstract-us.html).
[22] "Table 656: School Enrollment and Labor Force Status: 1980 and 1998," in *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1999) (at www.census.gov/prod/www/statistical-abstract-us.html).

non-profit organizations alike to create safe spaces for young people to learn about and fulfill responsibilities to others. More than ever, leaders need to incorporate young people into the broader community. Such efforts can take many forms. Here are some recommended approaches.

Recommendation 6: Foster Intergenerational Mentoring. As a society, we generally have more leisure time than our predecessors did, even though it seems like the reverse is true. One young adult told the Saguaro Seminar that more American adults need to consider themselves a "Batman" in search of a "Robin" – thus extending mentoring relationships from the comic book to real life. Batman, he noted, saves Robin from danger and encourages Robin to learn from his mistakes. Mentoring is clearly a concept that is catching on; the question is how to expand and improve these relationships.[23] Small schools are one method, as discussed. Another idea is for mentor organizations actively to recruit retirees, whose numbers are burgeoning and whose commitment to creating social capital is well documented. These people not only can impart a sense of civic responsibility but also provide practical advice on everything from starting a small business to resolving disputes among peers. Intergenerational mentoring also clearly furthers our "Bridging" principle.

Recommendation 7: Support the Community Service Movement. We wholeheartedly endorse a nationwide commitment to community service. Community service should be well-funded, well-publicized, well-organized and well-designed to make a tangible difference. Among us, we are divided on the question of whether all Americans should be required to perform a year or more of national service, whether in the military or domestic voluntary activity. However, we heartily endorse an expansion of non-mandatory programs such as AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, and Learn & Serve America.

Grants made through these programs should span multiple sectors and be both accountable and entrepreneurial. For example, the current infrastructure for national and community service, created first under the Bush Administration and expanded under the Clinton Administration, provides a healthy mix of national direction, state autonomy, and local initiative. It was built on a foundation laid by grassroots community groups and national non-profits. It allows for states to create their own plans for extending the service ethic through all sectors of society. It allows national non-profits to spread outstanding models across state lines. The model has allowed federal, state, and local agencies to capitalize on their respective comparative advantage to forge a working partnership whose benefits have not yet been fully realized.

Recommendation 8: Put Young People on Community Boards and Councils. Not all forms of community service need be supported with government dollars. The ethic of involving young people as resources and contributors could be spread much more broadly at little or no cost. Adults need only make room for eager young participants: employers might provide more

[23] See Carla Herrera, Cynthia L. Sipe, and Wendy S. McClanahan, with Amy J.A. Arbreton and Sarah K. Pepper, *Mentoring School-Aged Children: Relationship Development in Community-Based and School-Based Programs* (Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, April 2000). Also see Jean Baldwin Grossman, ed., *Contemporary Issues in Mentoring* (Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, April 2000), which discuss the preconditions for effective mentoring programs and barriers to increased mentoring. Both reports are available online (at http://www.ppv.org).

opportunities for young people to shadow adults at work; mayors and governors can establish youth councils to advise policymakers on issues affecting young people; and elected officials can permit young people to fill official participant or observer roles on state and local commissions. School systems and police departments can similarly establish youth advisory groups. Already, Youth on Board trains organizations to place young people on non-profit and governmental boards, and there are at least a half dozen national foundations that have supported youth-led philanthropy programs.[24]

Recommendation 9: Recognize the Capacity of Adolescents and the Circumstances that Support their Contributions. Each generation produces scores of extraordinary young people who take on an enormous social challenge and succeed beyond all expectation. Recently, for example, Craig Kielburger, a Canadian student shocked by child slavery in the developing world, created an international organization to eliminate it. Ashley Black, an 11-year old New Jersey resident, in 1992 successfully mobilized her community and eventually the state legislature to ban the importation of hate video games. Many of us remember Maine's Samantha Smith, who in 1982 reached out to Soviet Premier Yuri Andropov to end the nuclear arms race and build a bridge for peace.

Such examples should be widely publicized to encourage young people to make a difference, especially since young people are influenced by what the media praise. As one trainee at a job-and-service program remarked, "When my friends from the street saw me pick up my hammer and school books, they thought I had gone soft and square. When they saw me on television making a speech, they thought I was hip and wanted to know how they could participate."
Some recognition already occurs. The Reebok Human Rights Award, the Points of Light volunteer awards, the Do Something Brick Awards, and the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards all bring attention to exceptional service. Awards programs also help adults see the importance of youth contributions and to envision the kinds of contributions that best help adolescents develop. Every school, community, and institution should honor young people who make a contribution through service or civic engagement.

Recommendation 10: Make Contributions Count. Contributions could be made to count in some more concrete ways by, for example, easing access to scholarships or jobs. This could be done through "youth resumés," which, in addition to academic achievement, spotlight community contributions. Businesses might give hiring preference to young people with resumés demonstrating significant experience gained through service to others. Strategies of this kind are in place in the United Kingdom (where they are called Records of Achievement) and are similar to America's Career Passport idea of the 1970s. They ultimately depend on private and public sector employers' rewarding the young people who have these experiences.

[24] One of the oldest systematic youth-led philanthropy programs in the country is the Michigan Community Foundation's Youth Project, supported by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The foundation has provided matching funds to more than 60 community foundations across Michigan so that each can create a Youth Advisory Council to influence some portions of the foundations' grant making.

Recommendation 11: Recognize Contributors and Their Supporters. Opportunities for youth connection and contribution are unlikely without sustained adult facilitation. While some adults already grasp the importance of youth contribution and work to provide avenues for it, their roles and work are largely unrecognized. Thus, there are benefits to raising the profile and prestige of the adults who make youth engagement possible. In doing so, the best practices can be distilled and circulated, enabling these more skilled practitioners to mentor or coach less experienced counterparts and highlighting ways to overcome some of the typical frailties in these endeavors (such as recruiting, training, and retaining staff).

Recommendation 12: Strengthen Intermediary Organizations. As part of a concerted strategy to support young people's contributions, we need to distinguish between what should be done nationally and what should be locally organized. The local opportunities can be facilitated through a network of intermediary organizations that can both strengthen community-based youth organizations and connect these organizations to schools. There are already a number of national intermediary organizations that provide training and technical assistance to groups involving young people in community service or civic engagement. The number could be expanded and existing ones strengthened.

These intermediary organizations have already found ways to surmount many of the thorniest problems. For example, YouthBuild USA has taught adults to overcome their ingrained skepticism and habits of control and to engage young people in leadership roles. City Year, a Boston-based community service corps with affiliates around the country, has creatively brought public attention and awareness to the role of young people in community service. Youth Service America, a national organization that promotes youth engagement, has a solid track record of supporting young entrepreneurs who are starting youth-run national organizations. The National Crime Prevention Council, through its Youth As Resources program, has taught young people how to practice philanthropy by making grants to local groups. We need to find ways to expand the reach of these and other intermediary organizations.

Recommendation for Building Social Capital in Families

The family is a vital source of social capital. Many young people look to family members for trusting, lasting, and mutually reinforcing relationships. Parents set examples and limits, and parents raise hopes and create opportunities. Family members provide links to the broader community and serve as role models of good (or bad) citizenship. To the extent that family bonds fray, social capital is gravely at risk. American families face many challenges that were virtually unknown one or two generations ago. We believe that most besieged parents are doing their best, and (as parents ourselves) we would not presume to imply that there are easy answers to the difficulties of maintaining a modern family.

Recommendation 13: Revive "Family Time." Understanding the pressures on today's families, we nonetheless implore parents and their children to ponder ways to improve and increase their time together. Turn off the television and play a board game instead. Volunteer together. Research and write a family history together. Schedule three nights a week when everyone is expected to sit down to dinner together.

In many ways, parental stresses notwithstanding, building social capital in families may be easier than in any other realm. The payoff to young people is certain to be profound and lasting.

Concluding Thoughts

Never has there been a better time to re-engage children and young adults at all levels of our social institutions. Young people are disaffected, yet at the same time they are eager to find meaningful ways to participate in their schools and communities. The success of community-service corps dramatizes this yearning. What these programs have at their root is youth participation in decision-making, in service, and in public life. These programs showcase young people as contributors and thinkers in all their living contexts – families, religious communities, schools, non-profits, neighborhoods, and government bodies. As has been amply demonstrated, young people have good ideas for improving the quality of life and solving problems. When adults listen and respond thoughtfully to these ideas, and implement them where possible in partnership with young people, the result is stronger families, better schools, more effective programs, and more harmonious communities. When people are taught an ethic of meaningful service at an early age, they will live out that ethic throughout their lives. The groundwork has been laid for a bold, broad national investment in the social capital of our young people. The challenge now is for each of us as private individuals and as leaders of institutions to build on this promising foundation.

FULTON, MISSOURI

William Woods University

Dr. Lance Kramer, William Woods University provost, compares his student days to campus life today: "I recall John Kennedy's assassination. I was in the Rathskellar at the University of Wisconsin, watching the TV with hundreds of other students. Today, if something like that happened, all the kids would run back to their rooms to turn on the TV. They'd be by themselves, or with a sole roommate. We don't have the kind of 'cohesive collective,' if you will, that we used to. Kids are spending a lot more time in their dorms. Four out of five of our incoming freshmen want a private room.

"And if you go into dormitories today, you'll find an electronic jungle:…elaborate stereo systems;…TV's; … Nintendo sets… computers; and CD burners. We have trouble retrofitting dorms electrically. They're built to carry 1950 loads a radio, a lamp, and a hair-dryer and we've got a 1950's forty-story building load-wise in each dorm room.

"This is not a Luddite anti-web response. To live in the twenty-first century you have to have a lot of that stuff, you have to have electronic access. But there's a flesh and blood culture—interpersonal relations—that can't be packaged. To access them, you've to get into meeting rooms, public lectures and concert halls."

"I came here from Ohio State University" continues Provost Kramer "That place is so large, you could get a hundred students together for virtually anything. Here, there's been a long and continuing discussion about how to get students more involved in non-classroom activities—how to increase the intensity of campus life. We finally came up with a completely voluntary program that was very enticing, because it hooked into financial aid. We started it with our new students in the fall of 2000. 92% of them, 193 of our new students, signed a contract to earn up to $5,000 off their tuition for each of their next four years by attending campus activities. Current eligible activities include films, soccer and volleyball games, workshops in leadership and resume writing, art exhibits, plays, and Students For Social Work. Each student has a magnetic card and their attendance and participation in a variety of events is counted and monitored by four portable optical readers similar to the ones in grocery stores. Early indications are that student participation is increasing. We'll carefully evaluate the program for four years until this year's freshman class graduates."

The program is called L.E.A.D.—Leading, Educating, Achieving, Developing—and its slogan is "*Try LEAD. It Pays."* Dr. Kramer calls the program "very much a work in progress." He's quite aware of the irony inherent in the approach: do we make better student citizens by paying them to participate in campus life?

"Good old American capitalism" Kramer says. "The culture values money, its acquisition, utilization, and accumulation. And young people reflect those values. But I hope we're fighting the good fight. We believe that our liberal arts curriculum, coupled with the LEAD program, represent our best effort to expose youngsters to values and ways of thinking that suggest there's more than money to the good life."

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BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Citizen Schools

Martha Eddison says middle schoolers are "peeking through a window into the bigger world. It's a critical developmental period for them; the hormones haven't really kicked in yet, and they can just handle some adult skills. Any after school programs they do have are scarce and mostly mediocre, and lots of them have 'aged out' of the programs that are offered." These kids, ages 11-14, are the target constituency of the Citizen Schools program. Eddison, now Director of Communications for Citizen Schools, began as a volunteer teacher in its programs, in which adults offer "apprenticeships" to groups of eight to ten adolescents, typically meeting them three hours a week for ten weeks, guiding them in the completion of an active focused project. "So the kids can see results," says Eddison, "the projects are not about work, they are work. Teachers teach what turns them on, but with the focus on a product that is helpful in the larger community and works as much as possible with the middle school curriculum. Courses range from cooking (which is set up to include math, writing, and social service), through political speech writing and data analysis, to civil law. Each program ends with what Citizen Schools calls a "WOW,"—a high-focus product, performance, or result. WOWS have included publication of student journalism stories about local subway stops that led to the installation of safety call-boxes; mock trials before real judges in a federal courthouse; the filing of legal briefs which helped to close a building owned by a slum landlord."

John Werner, a long-time Citizen Teacher and now a Campus Director for Citizen Schools, says "I was a public school teacher for years, and then joined this band of merry folks, and it's been one amazing adventure after another. We bring in experts ranging from corporate lawyers to local grandmas to morticians—anyone who loves their topic and wants to work with kids to make projects that make a difference in the community. In one class a while back, some of the kids started a holiday greeting card business; it has now become a continuing project that has sold over thirty thousand cards. One of our campuses is near a senior center and about thirty seniors come every day. It's a kind of Mickey Mouse Club for seniors—they hang out and support each other. I stopped there one day and asked the Club if there was anything that Citizen Schools kids could do to help them out. They took me to an entrance by some glass doors where there were a bunch of chairs. 'When we sit in these chairs,' they said, 'we get stuck. If our behinds are below our knees we can't wiggle out so well.' So the kids, working with a local expert carpenter, built a specially designed huge, red, rocking-chair-kind-of-bench-thing that can hold three seniors at a time, and it keeps the right part of their bodies elevated above their knees. It's a wonderfully obvious example of where kids made a difference."

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Chicago Illinois

Gallery 37

Once there was a vacant lot, Lot Number 37, across the street from Marshall Field's in the Chicago Loop. It was slated to contain an office building, but an economic recession was keeping it empty. In 1991, the Head of the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Mayor's wife came up with a plan to fill Lot 37 with a huge tent. They would hold a summer-long program of visual arts activities for young people and pay the kids, as apprentice workers, with job training funds. The story goes that when the Mayor heard of this idea, he pooh-poohed it as ridiculous. When told that his wife was a co-creator of the concept, he dubbed it a "great idea," and Gallery 37 was born.

Job training and exemplary mentoring programs are an integral part of Gallery 37 classes. Each class has a Lead Artist and Teaching Assistant who mentor the students, as well as several Senior Apprentices. "All of this," says Lead Artist Miriam Socoloff, "creates relationships among kids from different backgrounds. Their interactions are important to them because they are based on their respect for each other's work. Everyone is aware of the problem-solving nature of art work. They are appreciative of each other's process and they are open in their praise of each other. Then other divisions start to break down. I remember two sixteen-year-old girls from the summer program. One black, one white. Both grouchy and resistant to outside criticism. It was hard for me. But both girls were supportive of each other; and, that summer, they took under their wing a third student, a mentally handicapped girl. One day, under the tent, I heard music on the radio and I…saw all three girls belting out "You Make Me Feel Like A Natural Woman." And suddenly I was less resistant to them, and everything improved."

Listening to music in the art studio, and "listening to the students talk to each other, and giving them a chance to talk to me," says Socoloff, "can start to form in-depth relationships. Art is a good way into the lives of teenagers. Art is personal. And so is life. Things happen when you put them together."

One of Socoloff's former students, a young man who is now a BFA candidate at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, "came back to us a day before our tenth anniversary celebration," says Rachel Webster, Gallery 37's Public Relations Coordinator. "He is a pretty shy boy, quite religious, from a pretty dangerous neighborhood. His church had sold candy, taffy, and apples to raise money to send him on a Gallery 37 trip to study art and art history in Paris; he had graduated from our programs and started college. He wanted to express how our programs had affected his life, so, that day, wearing a three-piece suit, he came into the summer tent carrying several large three foot by three foot pieces of wood under his arms and on his back. Put together, they formed a life-sized self-portrait of his crucifixion. 'My old life died here,' he told us. 'As I sat in church so many Sundays and watched my cousins disappear to violence and jail and dead-end jobs, art resurrected me as a new person. It's frightening, too, in a way, but that is who I am now.'"

Contact: www.gallery37.org . 312-744-8925

Do Something

"After four student suicides, two murders on school grounds, six bombing threats, and racial problems at my previous school, Do Something made me happy to be a principal," says Dr. Harvey Chiles.

Do Something has national offices in New York City and programs in cities and towns ranging from Newark, NJ, to Los Angeles, CA, to McAllen, TX, to Beaver Dam, WI. Do Something hopes to become a nationwide league of young people, in grades K-12, who believe that they can plan community change and take action to make it happen. In each Do Something program, the young people are asked what they think should be done to help their community, and they are then given the resources, through their schools and their adult advisers, to bring their plans to life. Each school year includes a Town Meeting which brings together the kids and their supporting adults, as well as local business people and politicians. At the meeting, the students outline the goals from which they draw their projects.

When Dr. Harvey Chiles became a principal, he also became a Do Something "Community Coach" at his new high school in Illinois. Says Chiles: "Do Something shows that if you bring a diverse group of kids together with the right adults and with good processes, they will make good decisions. It's electrifying to watch. What I remember most at our Town Hall meeting was the intentional action of adults stepping back and not inserting themselves into the kids' process of priority making. When there was lag time in the meeting, when nothing seemed to be moving forward, the trained Community Coaches waited, and let the kids make things happen. There was a movement of the spirit in that room; it was, I think, a spiritual experience. It took my breath away."

Teri Dary is a teacher and Community Coach for third- and fourth-graders at Jefferson Elementary School in Beaver Dam, WI. She says her job as a community coach is similar to her role as a soccer coach: "You play off the strengths and build up the weaknesses of the kids on your team. The kids do the work, you guide them in the ways to do it. You start with simple tasks and work to get the kids to take the leadership themselves. My third- and fourth-graders now do all the outreach work and make all the media contacts. Kids will really seize the initiative: one fourth -grade girl had organized a neighborhood litter pick-up, set the date and locations, secured the equipment, and hand-written dozens and dozens of parental permission slips before I even found about it. A fifth-grader organized a statewide penny drive to support the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association. He and his team sent out more than four hundred letters to elementary schools around the state asking for a penny from each student. They collected over $1,700."

Contact: www.dosomething.org 212-523-1175

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
TreePeople

Andy Lipkis, L.A.'s Johnny Appleseed, has a remarkable knack for getting trees planted, and an equal gift for using trees to build social capital.

Don't bet against Andy. In 1973, while at summer camp in the San Bernardino Mountains, fifteen-year-old Andy learned that 40,000 trees died annually from L.A.'s air pollution. Andy mobilized his fellow campers to tear up an old parking lot and plant needed trees. He discovered that the California Division of Forestry had surplus tree seedlings, which it intended to destroy rather than donate to him. Several businesses refused his pleas to help buy the seedlings until the L.A. Times' article "Andy and the Bureaucratic Deadwood" ran. In three weeks, his project had 8,000 smog-resistant seedlings and nearly $10,000 in private donations, much of it arriving in quarters and dollar bills from young Californians. TreePeople, first named the California Conservation Project, was born.

Lipkis converted an abandoned fire station on Mulholland Drive into TreePeople headquarters in 1976 and by the following year they'd planted 50,000 trees, in newly created Coldwater Canyon Park.

His motto is "think big, think natural." In 1981, Lipkis said that TreePeople could organize citizens to plant 1,000,000 trees by the 1984 Olympics at no cost to the city, when the city was debating taking 20 years and $200 million to achieve the same goal. Four days before the Olympic flame arrived, the one-millionth tree, an apricot, was planted in Canoga Park.

Andy and his wife Kate have helped develop an urban forestry course that teaches city-dwellers not only how to select and plant trees, but that also catalyzes these neighbors into developing social networks as they care for these trees afterward.

His diagnosis of L.A. is true of many metropolises: "too much concrete, too much wasted water, too few trees." Thus, he has recently set about the even more ambitious task of turning all of Los Angeles into an urban watershed, where residents become stewards of an interlocking plan to preserve rain water, prevent flooding, and cool the region through trees. These efforts obviate the need to spend far more on power plants, storm runoffs, and water pipelines. His group has refurbished a house in South Central L.A., thereby demonstrating how underground cisterns, gradual runoffs, broad depressions (swales), mulch, and grading can help properties preserve valuable rain. He has mapped all of L.A. with a plan that incorporates the geography of each resident's home into this interlocking plan to save themselves and the city both rainwater and money.

He launched a Cool Schools initiative that diverted $220 million in government funds planned to pave 400 school playgrounds. Lipkis proposed tree planting, where added landscaping and tree maintenance costs were offset by linked school air conditioning savings. Lipkis says, "Mimic natural cycles. Look where your system is leaking, where the government is hemorrhaging money to fight against nature. There's almost always answers there." Through Cool Schools, low-income, at-risk youth plant trees on school campuses and are trained in forestry. The students at these

schools not only get beautified campuses, but learn about trees in classes and in teams provide ongoing care for them. The trees are strategically planted to absorb flood runoff, thereby making these areas intentional flood basins for a few days annually.

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APPENDIX: CHANGING THE WIND
SAGUARO SEMINAR VALUES

We began the Saguaro Seminar project believing that social capital – social networks and the bonds of trust and reciprocity that facilitate collective action – is a resource available for both positive and negative ends. Much as financial capital could be used by an individual to start an environmental clean-up firm (a social good) or to stockpile nerve gas (a social bad), social capital could be used by neighborhoods to build a playground or by groups like the Ku Klux Klan to terrorize minority groups. Despite its potential for abuse, we believe that social capital is used primarily for positive ends. There are far more Girl Scout troops in America than there are militia groups. Our conversations over two years made evident that the specific social capital building strategies endorsed by group members invariably were shaped by our individual and collective values. We thus thought it helpful to be explicit about the values that unite our effort. While we hope that others share these values, we list them not to be prescriptive or proselytizing.

We've taken our title "Changing the Wind" from one of our participants, who noted that politics too often is organized around replacing one wet-fingered politician (testing the winds of public opinion) with another. We need to think about *changing* the civic wind, not merely figuring out (in the manner of the stereotypical politician) which way the wind is blowing. Our hope is that this report, in conjunction with the efforts of millions of concerned Americans, can help to turn the vicious cycle of social-capital depletion into a virtuous circle of growth and renewal.

An Instrumental View of Social Capital

We care about increasing social capital at least in part because it is a vital resource for achieving societal goals. Scores of academic studies confirm that trust and civic engagement lubricate society's institutions. In so doing, social capital helps to ensure quality education, a more engaged citizenry and more accountable public decision makers, longer and healthier lives, reduced crime and violence, economic development and growth, increased tolerance and understanding among diverse groups of people, and even greater citizen compliance with laws. More social capital means broader generalized reciprocity, greater honesty toward others, and a more expansive sense of the "self." Social capital also helps to combat materialism and self-centeredness, two values that seem increasingly prevalent in our economically robust times.

While we support social capital building strategies that don't necessarily solve pressing societal problems directly, we prefer strategies that simultaneously address pressing social problems *and* build social capital, such as crime watch groups, revolving credit associations, and parent-teacher associations. Our group is confident that the former (groups like choral societies) enlarge the stock of social capital and are likely to have indirect, long-term effects on ameliorating pressing social issues. We must be cautious that strategies to increase the latter (e.g., parent-teacher associations) often seem like "civic castor oil"– bolstering America's civic health but appealing only to a narrow slice of Americans, the civic do-gooders. Faced with a choice between social capital building strategies that might attract hundreds of thousands of people, even without directly addressing America's pressing problems, and civic do-gooding ideas that attract relatively few, we favor the former. Of course, groups oriented toward solving civic problems

with broadly appealing methods are our ideal choice, since they provide a "double bang for the buck"

Our desire to reinvigorate American civic life is not an exercise in nostalgia. We do not seek to recreate the 1950s, even in an airbrushed version without sexism and oppression of racial or cultural minorities. We seek participation, not conformity. We hope to reinvigorate our long tradition of strong communities within the realities, both positive and negative, of the recent technological, social, and economic changes in American society.

Values to foster. Our key goal is to foster greater reciprocity in our dealings with one another. Greater reciprocity will build and strengthen earned trust, rather than forging a Potemkin Village of untrustworthy citizens. Within this goal of greater collective effort and reciprocity, however, we respect individuality, and the freedom not to join (with no moral stigma for non-joiners). We hope to forge more social capital without undermining our ability to be distinct individuals.

Types of social capital we support or oppose. Social trust and connectedness in America are far more common among Americans of similar a race, ethnicity, class, age, or religion than among people who are different from one another. We believe that society benefits immeasurably by creating opportunities for "bridging social capital," bringing citizens together *across* these differences. This bridging social capital helps to forge common ground and promote citizen responsibility and engagement. Nevertheless, we believe that it is human nature to seek out people like oneself; the maxim "birds of a feather flock together" embodies deeper undercurrents of human behavior. Therefore "non-bridging" (or "bonding") forms of trust will always be more prevalent than "bridging" bonds. In most cases, social-capital connections will involve people with some similarities and some differences (such as the varied ethnicities of alumna from a women's college, or the varied socioeconomic backgrounds of members of a Catholic fraternal group). Such mixed forms of bridging and bonding social capital may represent the most practical way of meeting our twin goals of greatly increasing community connectedness while multiplying our interactions with people unlike ourselves.

In sum, we support all social capital strategies, as long as groups that are privileged or advantaged do not demonize those who don't or can't belong. We seek strategies that will raise the aggregate level of trustworthiness and trust in society.[1] We also believe that many efforts that begin as non-bridging social capital (for example ethnic associations) will lead to bridging social capital (for example, searching for allies in issue-based coalitions).

Tolerance and deliberation. Many people would rather change others than tolerate their errors, but we believe we should tolerate if we can't persuade. Bridging social capital will only have value if we learn from our differences, even where such learning doesn't produce agreement. We want to expand social capital not only because it has practical uses, such as improving public health and making streets safer, but also because it creates the deliberative space that promotes greater understanding. This greater understanding, ultimately, will enable Americans to reach agreement on policies that will improve our nation for all citizens.

[1] Thus, a strategy to boost the Mafia or Crips and Bloods would fail this test, but one to assist Hadassah or an all African-American church might pass.

who we are: participants in the Saguaro Seminar

Xavier de Souza Briggs is a Harvard Professor whose research focuses on urban policy, community building, and strategic management. He has done community planning in the South Bronx and acted as the Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Rev. Bliss Browne is founder and president of Imagine Chicago, an organization which catalyzes intergenerational urban connections and harnesses civic imagination as a resource for innovative community building. She is an ordained Episcopal priest, a director of seven not-for-profit boards, and a former Division Head of the First National Bank of Chicago.

Pastor Kirbyjon Caldwell is senior pastor at the Windsor Village-St. John's United Methodist Churches. His 120 ministries and 9 non-profit organizations provide a community center, food pantry, drug abuse treatment program, juvenile delinquency program and 24-hour crisis nursery center. He is the founder of Corinthian Point, a 34 acre master-planned community, and he has developed the Power Center which provides community housing, corporate offices, and job training services.

John DiIulio Jr. is Frederic Fox Leadership Professor of Politics, Religion and Civil Society at the University of Pennsylvania. There he directs the Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society and the Robert A. Fox Leadership Program. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute and the Brookings Institution, and Senior Counsel to Public/Private Ventures.

E.J. Dionne is a *Washington Post* columnist and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, where he is investigating government's impact on social capital and the role of religious institutions in public life. He *wrote Why Americans Hate Politics* and *They Only Look Dead: Why Progressives Will Dominate The Next Political Era.*

Carolyn Doggett is executive director of the California Teachers Association. She spearheaded CTA's opposition to anti-affirmative-action proposals and the voucher initiative, and has organized representation elections, charter amendment campaigns, and school board and legislative campaigns.

Lewis Feldstein is co-chair of the Saguaro Seminar and president of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the principal source of venture capital for New Hampshire's nonprofit community. Feldstein worked with the civil rights movements in Mississippi, and served for seven years in senior staff positions in the administration of New York City Mayor John V. Lindsay.

Christopher Gates is co-chair of the Saguaro Seminar and president of the National Civic League, which is committed to consensus-based decision making, citizen participation, and diversity. He is also the director of the Alliance for National Renewal and founding chairman of the Colorado Institute for Leadership Training.

Stephen Goldsmith was the chief domestic policy advisor for George W. Bush's presidential campaign. He was mayor of Indianapolis and founder of the Front Porch Alliance, an initiative to strengthen the local social infrastructure (churches, neighborhoods, and families). He is the author of *The Twenty-First Century City: Resurrecting Urban America* and the chairman of Netgov.com

Amy Gutmann is Laurance S. Rockefeller University Professor of Politics at Princeton. She is the founding director of Princeton's Center for Human Values and the Program in Ethics and Public Affairs. She is an expert on deliberative democracy and on the education of youth to be vibrant democratic citizens. She wrote *Democratic Education, Freedom of Association*, and *Liberal Equality*, and co-authored *Democracy and Disagreement* and *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race.*

Henry Izumizaki is the founder of a new grassroots leadership network in California. He is the former chief strategist for the Urban Strategies Council and past director of *the San Francisco Bay Area Eureka Communities*, a nonprofit leadership development program. He currently serves as the CFO for the California. Consumer Protection Foundation and is Chair of the board for MOCHA, the Museum for Children's Art.

Vanessa Kirsch is president and founder of New Profit Inc., an innovative venture capital fund for the non-profit sector focused on growing social entrepreneurial organizations to scale. Prior to launching NPI, Vanessa founded and led two non-profit organizations, Public Allies (a national service program), and the Women's Information Network.

Carol Lamm is a consultant in Community Organization Development in Kentucky and Central Appalachia. She is the former program development director for the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED), which assists communities through business financing, entrepreneurship training, and the facilitation of sustainable development. She is also the former director of the Brushy Fork Institute of Berea College; a leadership development program.

Liz Lerman founded the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange in 1976. LLDE travels to communities and spends months listening to residents' stories, turning their salient themes into dances that are performed for the community by both community and troupe members.

Glenn Loury is a professor and director of the Institute on Race and Social Division at Boston University. His research interests include welfare economics, game theory, industrial organization, natural resource economics, and income distribution. He authored *One by One, From the Inside Out: Essays and Reviews on Race and Responsibility in America.*

John P. Mascotte is president and CEO of Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Kansas City. He is a former chairman and CEO of the Continental Insurance Company and a former chairman of the board of Local Initiatives Support Corporation, a major national funding agency for community development.

Martha Minow is a professor at Harvard Law School where she teaches courses on school reform, family law, and law and social change. Her books include *Making All the Difference: Inclusion, Exclusion, and American Law; Not Only For Myself: Identity, Politics, and Law*; and *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Violence.*

Mark Moore is the Guggenheim Professor of Criminal Justice at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. He is director of the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations. His research focuses on public sector leadership, particularly in criminal justice, in governmental organizations, and in the community, non-profit, and voluntary sectors.

Barack Obama is an Illinois State Senator and a civil rights attorney at Miner, Barnhill and Galland, specializing in employment discrimination, fair housing and voting rights litigation. He is a senior lecturer at the University of Chicago, serves on the boards of numerous community organizations, and was a director of Project Vote! which registered more than 100,000 new voters.

Peter Pierce III is president of the First Bethany Bancorp, a small, family-owned, community-focused bank, and co-founder of Oklahoma MetaFund Community Development Corporation. He has held municipal elective office, organized transitional housing for homeless families, and been involved in numerous non-profit and faith-based organizations.

Robert D. Putnam directs the Saguaro Seminar and is a political science professor at Harvard University and a former dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government. He *authored Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* and *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*.

Paul Resnick is an associate professor at the University of Michigan School of Information, where he directs the Community Information Corps. He was a pioneer in the field of recommender systems (sometimes called collaborative filtering or social filtering), which guide people to interesting materials based on recommendations from other people.

Juan Sepulveda directs The Common Enterprise in San Antonio, TX, which develops programs to foster community networks. He is a board member of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the National Civic League, and the Center for Policy Alternatives.

Robert F. Sexton is the executive director of Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence in Kentucky, one of the nation's largest grass-roots campaigns to involve citizens and parents in education reform. He is the founder and president of the Kentucky Center for Public Issues, and in 1994 won the Charles A. Dana Award for Pioneering Achievement in Education.

George Stephanopoulos is a visiting professor at Columbia University and a political commentator for ABC News. He was the communications director and a senior advisor to the Clinton Administration, has led efforts to encourage dialogue among voters, and is interested in television's role in facilitating civic engagement.

Dorothy Stoneman founded YouthBuild USA, a national youth program that fosters community leadership through education and low-income housing development. She has served as a community organizer developing schools, youth programs, housing programs, and community coalitions in Harlem.

Lisa Sullivan is founder and president of LISTEN, Inc., which strengthens the social capital and leadership of urban youth for civic engagement and community problem solving. She was a fellowship development consultant for the Next Generation Leadership Program of the Rockefeller Foundation. She is former director of the field division at the Children's Defense Fund, where she co-founded and directed the Black Student Leadership Network.

James Wallis convenes Call to Renewal, a federation of faith-based organizations working to overcome poverty. He is a board member of the Sojourners Neighborhood Center, which provides supportive programs for youth and parents, and Editor-in-Chief of *Sojourners* magazine, which reports on faith, politics, and culture. He authored *Faith Works: Lessons from the Life of an Activist Preacher* and teaches a course on faith and politics at Harvard.

Vin Weber is a managing partner with the law firm of Clark & Weinstock. He co-directs Empower America, an organization advocating policies that emphasize individual responsibility and accountability in approaching social problems. He co-directs the Domestic Policy Project of the Aspen Institute and served in the House of Representatives.

William Julius Wilson is a professor of social policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, an expert on urban poverty, and a former president of the American Sociological Association. He authored *When Work Disappears* which addresses the impact of declining social capital on the problems of the American urban underclass.

What to do:

100 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital is built through hundreds of little and big actions we take every day. We've gotten you started with a list of 100 ideas, drawn from suggestions made by many people and groups. Try some of these or try your own. We need to grow this list. If you have other ideas, post them at: http://www.bettertogether.org

You know what to do. Build connections to people. Build trust with others. Get involved.

1. Organize a social gathering to welcome a new neighbor
2. Attend town meetings
3. Register to vote and vote
4. Support local merchants
5. Volunteer your special skills to an organization
6. Donate blood
7. Start a community garden
8. Mentor someone of a different ethnic or religious group
9. Surprise a new neighbor by making a favorite dinner–and include the recipe
10. Tape record your parents' earliest recollections and share them with your children
11. Plan a vacation with friends or family
12. Don't gossip
13. Help fix someone's flat tire
14. Organize or participate in a sports league
15. Join a gardening club
16. Attend home parties when invited
17. Become an organ donor
18. Attend your children's athletic contests, plays and recitals
19. Get to know your children's teachers
20. Join the local Elks, Kiwanis, or Knights of Columbus
21. Get involved with Brownies or Cub/Boy/Girl Scouts
22. Start a monthly tea group
23. Speak at or host a monthly brown bag lunch series at your local library
24. Sing in a choir
25. Get to know the clerks and salespeople at your local stores
26. Attend PTA meetings
27. Audition for community theater or volunteer to usher
28. Give your park a weatherproof chess/checkers board
29. Play cards with friends or neighbors
30. Give to your local food bank
31. Participate in walk-a-thons
32. *Employers*: encourage volunteer/community groups to hold meetings on your site
33. Volunteer in your child's classroom or chaperone a field trip
34. Join or start a babysitting cooperative
35. Attend school plays
36. Answer surveys when asked
37. *Businesses*: invite local government officials to speak at your workplace
38. Attend Memorial Day parades and express appreciation for others
39. Form a local outdoor activity group
40. Participate in political campaigns
41. Attend a local budget committee meeting
42. Form a computer group for local senior citizens
43. Help coach Little League or other youth sports – even if you don't have a kid playing
44. Help run the snack bar at the Little League field
45. Form a "tools cooperative" with neighbors and share ladders, snow blowers, etc.
46. Start a lunch gathering or a discussion group with co-workers
47. Offer to rake a neighbor's yard or shovel his/her walk
48. Join a carpool
49. *Employers*: give employees time (e.g., 3 days per year to work on civic projects)
50. Plan a "Walking Tour" of a local historic area
51. Eat breakfast at a local gathering spot on Saturdays

52. Have family dinners and read to your children
53. Run for public office
54. Stop and make sure the person on the side of the highway is OK
55. Host a block party or a holiday open house
56. Start a fix-it group–friends willing to help each other clean, paint, garden, etc.
57. Offer to serve on a town committee
58. Join the volunteer fire department
59. Go to church...or temple...or go outside with your children–talk to them about spirituality
60. If you grow tomatoes, plant extra for an lonely elder who lives nearby – better yet, ask him/her to teach you and others how to can the extras
61. Ask a single diner to share your table for lunch
62. Stand at a major intersection holding a sign for your favorite candidate
63. Persuade a local restaurant to have a designated "meet people" table
64. Host a potluck supper before your Town Meeting
65. Take dance lessons with a friend
66. Say "thanks" to public servants – police, firefighters, town clerk…
67. Fight to keep essential local services in the downtown area–your post office, police station, school, etc.
68. Join a nonprofit board of directors
69. Gather a group to clean up a local park or cemetery
70. When somebody says "government stinks," suggest they help fix it
71. Turn off the TV and talk with friends or family
72. Hold a neighborhood barbecue
73. Bake cookies for new neighbors or work colleagues
74. Plant tree seedlings along your street with neighbors and rotate care for them
75. Volunteer at the library
76. Form or join a bowling team
77. Return a lost wallet or appointment book
78. Use public transportation and start talking with those you regularly see
79. Ask neighbors for help and reciprocate
80. Go to a local folk or crafts festival
81. Call an old friend
82. Register for a class – then go
83. Accept or extend an invitation
84. Talk to your kids or parents about their day
85. Say hello to strangers
86. Log off and go to the park
87. Ask a new person to join a group for a dinner or an evening
88. Participate in pot luck meals
89. Volunteer to drive someone
90. Say hello when you spot an acquaintance in a store
91. Host a movie night
92. Exercise together or take walks with friends or family
93. Assist with or create your town or neighborhood's newsletter
94. Organize a neighborhood litter pick-up – with lawn games afterwards
95. Collect oral histories from older town residents
96. Join a book club discussion or get the group to discuss local issues
97. Volunteer to deliver Meals-on-Wheels in your neighborhood
98. Start a children's story hour at your local library
99. Be real. Be humble. Acknowledge others' self-worth
100. Tell friends and family about social capital and why it matters

Endnote

The Saguaro report is the distillation of a fruitful multi-year conversation around strategies for rebuilding our nation's stock of social capital – the community connections of trust and reciprocity that help make schools work better, our neighborhoods safer, our residents happier and healthier, our economies more productive, and our public institutions of government more responsive.

This report embodies the spirit of those conversations and reflects our collective learning. While each of us *may* not agree with each specific point, the report captures the sense of the group.

Xavier de Souza Briggs, Rev. Bliss Browne, Rev. Kirbyjon Caldwell,
E.J. Dionne Jr., John DiIulio, Carolyn Doggett, Lew Feldstein, Chris Gates,
Stephen Goldsmith, Amy Gutmann, Henry Izumizaki, Vanessa Kirsch,
Carol Lamm, Liz Lerman, Glenn Loury, Jake Mascotte, Martha Minow,
Mark Moore, Barack Obama, Peter G. Pierce, III, Robert Putnam, Paul Resnick,
Juan Sepulveda, Robert Sexton, George Stephanopoulos, Dorothy Stoneman,
Lisa Sullivan, James Wallis, Vin Weber, and William Julius Wilson

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